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The Poets and the Poetry
of the Nineteenth Century

The Poets and the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century.

Christina G. Rossetti
to
Katharine Tynan

Edited by
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In the prefatory note of the first edition of this work (1891) the Editor invited criticism with a view to the improvement of future editions. Several critics responded to this appeal, and their valuable suggestions have been considered in preparing this re-issue. In some cases the text has been revised and the selection varied; in others, additions have been made to complete the representation. The biographical and bibliographical matter has been brought up to date.—A.H.M.

PREFATORY

THE presentation of the Women Poets of the Century in two volumes, in place of the one volume occupied by them in the first edition, has enabled the Editor to add to the representation of some, and to include others who had no place in the former edition—poets, much of whose work has been published since its issue. Christina Rossetti and Mrs. Radford are examples of the former, and the latter include Katharine Tynan Hinkson, Jane Barlow, Annie Matheson, Ada Bartrick Baker, Rosa Newmarch, and Cicely Fox-Smith. To these authors and their publishers the Editor's thanks are gratefully tendered; to Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons, the publishers of Mrs. Baker's "Palace of Dreams"; to Messrs. Lawrence & Bullen, the publishers of Mrs. Hinkson's poems; to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., the publishers of "Ghost-Bereft," by Jane Barlow; Mr. John Lane, publisher of "Songs to a Singer," by Rosa Newmarch; and to Mr. Elkin Mathews, the publisher of "Horæ Amoris: Songs and Sonnets," by Rosa Newmarch, and "Wings of the Morning," by Cicely Fox-Smith.

That there are other women poets who are worthy of representation in this work, and who might have been included in this edition but for the arbitrary limits of space, must be admitted. The Editor's desire, however, has been throughout to represent adequately those he felt bound to include, rather than give inadequate representation to a larger number, and it must be left to future editions to do justice to those whom present limits exclude.

Further references to women poets will be found in the appendix of this volume, and in the general appendix at the end of Vol. VII. "Poets and Poetry of the XIXth Century" (Bridges to Kipling): also in the volumes X., XI., and XII., devoted to humorous and sacred poetry. All are included in the general index at the end of Vol. XII. (Plumptre to Doudney).

A. H. M.

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Christina G. Rossetti

to

Katharine Tynan.

Christina G. Rossetti.

1830—1894.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI, the younger sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was born in London December 5th, 1830, and died there December 29th, 1894. She was the daughter of Gabriele Rossetti, the Neapolitan poet, patriot, and commentator on Dante; her mother was Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori, an Italian of partly English extraction, born in England, and in all her sympathies a complete Englishwoman. When Miss Rossetti was sixteen, her grandfather, G. Polidori, printed at his private press a little pamphlet of "Verses by Christina G. Rossetti" (1847). In 1850 she contributed a few poems to *The Germ*, under the pseudonym of Ellen Alleyn. It was not till 1862 that her first volume of poetry, "Goblin Market, and other Poems," appeared. This was followed by a second volume, "The Prince's Progress, and other Poems," in 1866. In 1870 appeared a collection of tales under the name of "Commonplace, and other Short Stories." Two years afterwards Miss Rossetti published a little book of rhymes and snatches, "Sing-Song, a Nursery Rhyme-book," with illustrations by Arthur Hughes. In 1874 appeared "Speaking Likenesses," three short tales slightly connected together, somewhat in the manner of "Alice in Wonderland." From this time until 1881 Miss Rossetti published nothing but devotional works: "Annus Domini, a Collect for

each Day of the Year, founded on a Text of Holy Scripture" (1874); "Seek and Find: Short Studies of the Benedicite" (1879); "Called to be Saints, the Minor Festivals devotionally Studied" (1881). In 1881 appeared a new volume of poetry, "A Pageant, and other Poems." Subsequently Miss Rossetti published two more works of devotion, "Letter and Spirit, Notes on tne Commandments" (1883), and "Time Flies, a Reading Diary" (1885). The latter, which contains some of her most charming later work, shows Miss Rossetti in the double character of poet and homilist. It consists of reflections, in prose and verse, for every day of the year. Though written for purposes of devotion, it may be read for artistic pleasure, so full of charm, of delicate harmony, of quaint humour, of subtle observation, is both verse and prose. Miss Rossetti's "Poetical Works" were published in one volume in 1890.

The poetry of Miss Rossetti, as I have said elsewhere, deeply thought, intensely felt as it is, appeals first of all to the reader through a quality not always found, in any specially prominent degree, in the work of passionate or thoughtful poets. Almost every poem leaves on the mind a sense of satisfaction, of rightness and fitness; we are not led to think of art, but we notice, almost unconsciously, the way in which every word fits into its place, as if it could not possibly have been used otherwise. The secret of this style—which seems innocently unaware of its own beauty—is, no doubt, its sincerity, leading to the employment of homely words where homely words are wanted, and always of natural and really expressive words; yet not sincerity only, but sincerity as the servant of a finely touched and

exceptionally *seeing* nature. A power of seeing finely beyond the scope of ordinary vision: that, in a few words, is the note of Miss Rossetti's genius, and it brings with it a subtle and as if instinctive power of expressing subtle and yet as if instinctive conceptions; always clearly, always simply, with a singular and often startling homeliness, yet in a way and about subjects as far removed from the borders of commonplace as possible. This power is shown in every division of her poetry; in the peculiar witchery of the poems dealing with the supernatural, in the exaltation of the devotional poems, in the particular charm of the child-songs, bird-songs, and nature lyrics, in the special variety and the special excellence of the poems of affection and meditation. The union of homely yet always select literalness of treatment with mystical visionariness, or visionariness which is sometimes mystical, constitutes the peculiar quality of her poetry—poetry which has, all the same, several points of approach and distinct varieties of characteristic.

Miss Rossetti's power of seeing what others do not see, and of telling us about it in such a way that we too are able to see it, is displayed nowhere more prominently than in those poems which deal, in one way or another, with the supernatural. "Goblin-Market"—surely the most naïve and childlike poem in our language—is the perfect realisation of those happy and fantastic aspects of the supernatural which we call Fairyland. Miss Rossetti's witch-craft is so subtle that she seems to bewitch, not us only, but herself, and without trying to do either. The narrative has so matter-of-fact, and at the same time so fantastic and bewildering an air, that

we are fairly puzzled into acceptance of everything. The very rhythm, the leaping and hopping rhythm, which renders the goblin merchantmen visible to us, has something elfin and proper to "the little people" in its almost infantile jingle and cadence.

"Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter-skelter, hurry-scurry
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugged her and kissed her:
Squeezed and caressed her:
Stretched up their dishes
Panniers and plates:
"Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red and basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs."

In "The Prince's Progress" we are in quite another corner of the world of faëry. The poem is more mature, it is handled in a more even and masterly way; but it is, while still very different, more like other romantic ballads—William Morris's, for instance—than "Goblin-Market" is like anything at all. The narrative is in the pure romantic spirit, and the touch of magic comes into it suddenly and unawares. The verse is throughout flexible and expressive, but towards the end, just before and during the exquisite lament, bride-song and death-song at once, it falls into a cadence of such solemn and tender sweetness as even Miss Rossetti rarely equalled.

"Too late for love, too late for joy,
Too late, too late!
You loitered on the road too long,
You trifled at the gate:
The enchanted dove upon her branch
Died without a mate;
The enchanted princess in her tower
Slept, died, behind the grate;
Her heart was starving all this while
You made it wait.

"Ten years ago, five years ago,
One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
Though somewhat slow;
Then you had known her living face
Which now you cannot know:
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
To melt the snow.

"Is she fair now as she lies?
Once she was fair;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.

Now these are poppies in her locks,
White poppies she must wear;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
And the want graven there:
Or is the hunger fed at length,
Cast off the care?

"We never saw her with a smile
Or with a frown;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
Though tossed of down;
She little heeded what she wore,
Kirtle, or wreath, or gown;
We think her white brows often ached
Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks
That used to be so brown.

"We never heard her speak in haste:
Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
As it was meet,
Her heart sat silent through the noise
And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
No hurry in her feet,
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
That she might run to greet.

"You should have wept her yesterday,
Wasting upon her bed:
But wherefore should you weep to-day
That she is dead?
Lo, we who love weep not to-day,
But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
Your roses are too red:
Let be these poppies, not for you
Cut down and spread."

Yet another phase of the supernatural meets us in a little group of poems ("The Ghost's Petition,"

"The Hour and the Ghost," "At Home," The Poor Ghost") in which the problems of the unseen world are dealt with in a singular way. Miss Rossetti's genius was essentially sombre, or it wrote itself at least on a dark background of gloom. The thought of death had a constant fascination for her, almost such a fascination as it had for Leopardi or Baudelaire; only it was not the fascination of attraction, as with the one, nor of repulsion, as with the other, but of interest, sad but scarcely unquiet interest in what the dead are doing underground, in their memories —if memory they have—of the world they have left; a singular, whimsical sympathy with the poor dead, like that expressed in two famous lines of the "Fleurs du Mal."

These strange little poems, with their sombre and fantastic colouring—the picturesque outcome of deep and curious pondering on things unseen—lead easily, by an obvious transition, to the poems of spiritual life, in the customary or religious sense of the term. Miss Rossetti's devotional poetry is quite unlike most other poetry of the devotional sort. It is intensely devout, sometimes almost liturgical in character; surcharged with personal emotion, a cry of the heart, an ecstasy of the soul's grief or joy: it is never didactic, or concerned with purposes of edification. She does not preach; she prays. We are allowed to overhear a dialogue of the soul with God. Her intensity of religious feeling touches almost on the ecstasy of Jacopone da Todi, but without his delirium. It is usually a tragic ecstasy. In such a poem as "Despised and Rejected," one of the most marvellous religious poems in the language, the reality of the externalised emotion is

almost awful: it is scarcely to be read without a shudder. Christ stands at the door and knocks, at the unopening door of the heart.

"Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
Leave me in peace;
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?

But all night long that voice spake urgently:
"Open to Me."
Still harping in mine ears:
"Rise, let Me in."
Pleading with tears:
"Open to Me, that I may come to thee."
While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:
"My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me."

So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore."

In "Advent," another masterpiece, the ecstasy is of faith—faith triumphant after watching and waiting, after vigils and darkness: a cry from spiritual watch-towers. In all these poems we are led through phase after phase of a devout soul; we find a sequence of

keen and brooding moods of religious feeling and meditation, every word burningly real and from the heart, yet in every word subjected to the keenest artistic scrutiny, the most finished and flawless artistic manipulation.

In Miss Rossetti's religious poems there is a recurring burden of lament over the vanity of things, the swiftness of the way to death, the faithlessness of affection, the relentless pressure of years, finding voice in the magnificent paraphrase on Ecclesiastes (the early poem called "A Testimony"), in the two splendid sonnets, "Vanity of Vanities," and "One Certainty," and, less sadly, in the little lyric masterpiece, "Passing away, saith the World, passing away!"

"All things are vanity, I said:
Yea vanity of vanities.
The rich man dies; and the poor dies:
The worm feeds sweetly on the dead.
Whate'er thou lackest, keep this trust:
All in the end shall have but dust:

The one inheritance, which best
And worst alike shall find and share:
The wicked cease from troubling there,
And there the weary be at rest;
There all the wisdom of the wise
Is vanity of vanities.

Man flourishes as a green leaf,
And as a leaf doth pass away;
Or as a shade that cannot stay
And leaves no track, his course is brief:
Yet man doth hope and fear and plan
Till he is dead:—oh foolish man!

Our eyes cannot be satisfied
With seeing, nor our ears be filled

With hearing: yet we plant and build
And buy and make our borders wide;
We gather wealth, we gather care,
But know not who shall be our heir.

Why should we hasten to arise
So early, and so late take rest?
Our labour is not good; our best
Hopes fade; our heart is stayed on lies:
Verily, we sow wind; and we
Shall reap the whirlwind, verily.

He who hath little shall not lack;
He who hath plenty shall decay:
Our fathers went; we pass away;
Our children follow on our track:
So generations fail, and so
They are renewed and come and go.

The earth is fattened with our dead;
She swallows more and doth not cease:
Therefore her wine and oil increase
And her sheaves are not numberèd;
Therefore her plants are green, and all
Her pleasant trees lusty and tall.

Therefore the maidens cease to sing,
And the young men are very sad;
Therefore the sowing is not glad,
And mournful is the harvesting.
Of high and low, of great and small,
Vanity is the lot of all.

A King dwelt in Jerusalem;
He was the wisest man on earth;
He had all riches from his birth,
And pleasures till he tired of them;
Then, having tested all things, he
Witnessed that all are vanity."

So, in its grave and sober assurance of earthly mischance speaks the "Testimony." But the quiet sad-

ness of these poems of abstract meditation over the vanity of things, passes, when we turn to another well-defined class of poems, into a keener and more heart-moving outcry of sorrow. There is a theme to which Miss Rossetti returns again and again, a theme into which she is able to infuse a more intense feeling than we find in any other but her devotional pieces—that of a heart given sorrowfully over to the memory of a passion spent somehow in vain, disregarded or self-repressed. There is a marvellously affecting expression given in such poems as that named "Twice," to the suppressed bitterness of a disappointed heart, anguish of unuttered passion reaching to a point of ascetic abnegation, a devout frenzy of patience, which is the springing of the bitter seed of hope dead in a fiery martyrdom. In that "masterpiece of ascetic passion," as Dante Rossetti justly called the dramatic lyric entitled "The Convent Threshold," this conception obtains its very finest realisation. We meet with nothing like the passion, nothing like the imagination, of this superb poem, save in one or two pieces only of her poetic work. The romantic feeling, the religious fervour, the personal emotion —all her noblest gifts and qualities, with her very noblest possibilities of style and versification—meet here as one.

"Your eyes look earthward, mine look up.
I see the far-off city grand,
Beyond the hills a watered land,
Beyond the gulf a gleaming strand
Of mansions where the righteous sup;
Who sleep at ease among their trees,
Or wake to sing a cadenced hymn
With Cherubim and Seraphim;

They bore the Cross, they drained the cup,
Racked, roasted, crushed, wrenched limb from limb,
They the offscouring of the world:
The heaven of starry heavens unfurled,
The sun before their face is dim.

You looking earthward, what see you?
Milk-white, wine-flushed among the vines,
Up and down leaping, to and fro,
Most glad, most full, made strong with wines,
Blooming as peaches pearled with dew,
Their golden windy hair afloat,
Love-music warbling in their throat,
Young men and women come and go.

* * * * *

"I tell you what I dreamed last night:
It was not dark, it was not light,
Cold dews had drenched my plenteous hair
Through clay; you came to seek me there.
And 'Do you dream of me?' you said.
My heart was dust that used to leap
To you; I answered half asleep:
"My pillow is damp, my sheets are red,
There's a leaden tester to my bed:
Find you a warmer playfellow,
A warmer pillow for your head,
A kinder love to love than mine."
You wrung your hands; while I, like lead,
Crushed downwards through the sodden earth:
You smote your hands but not in mirth,
And reeled but were not drunk with wine.

For all night long I dreamed of you:
I woke and prayed against my will,
Then slept to dream of you again.
At length I rose and knelt and prayed;
I cannot write the words I said,
My words were slow my tears were few

But through the dark my silence spoke
Like thunder. When this morning broke,
My face was pinched, my hair was grey,
And frozen blood was on the sill
Where stifling in my struggle I lay.

If now you saw me you would say:
Where is the face I used to love?
And I would answer: Gone before;
It tarries veiled in Paradise.
When once the morning star shall rise,
When earth with shadow flees away
And we stand safe within the door,
Then you shall lift the veil thereof.
Look up, rise up: for far above
Our palms are grown, our place is set;
There we shall meet as once we met,
And love with old familiar love."

The passion here is almost fierce. In "Monna Innominata: a Sonnet of Sonnets," the masterpiece of the "Pageant" volume, a much quieter, perhaps only a sadder, voice is given to the same cry of the heart. This sonnet-sequence—a comparison of which with the sonnet-sequence of Mrs. Browning she herself did not shrink from challenging—should and will take its place among the great works in that line, if delicate art, perfect within its limits, wedded to delicately sincere and deep emotion, limited, too, within a certain range, can give it right of admission among the stronger and more varied sequences of Dante and Petrarch, of Mrs. Browning and Rossetti.

In a world which wears chiefly an aspect of gloom for her, which is tragical in its earnestness, when it is not tragical in its pain or passion, there are still for Miss Rossetti, as for all sane and healthy spirits

in however dark a world, two elements of pure joy, two eternal comforters—nature and children. To her, nature was always a relief, an escape; certain aspects she responded to with a peculiarly exhilarating joyousness. It was always the calm aspects of natural things, and chiefly *growing* nature, that called out her sympathy and delight. What we call scenery she never refers to; nor to mountains, nor often to the sea. But nowhere in poetry can we get such lovingly minute little pictures of flowers, and corn, and birds, and animals; of the seasons—spring particularly. She delights in just such things as are the delight of a child; her observation is, as of set purpose, very usually that of a thoughtful and observant child. Children, we must remember, especially very small children, play a great part in the world of Miss Rossetti's poetry. They have, indeed, a book all to themselves, one of the quaintest and prettiest books in the language. "Sing-Song: a Nursery Rhyme-book," illustrated with pictures, almost equal to the poems, by Arthur Hughes, makes a very little book for all its hundred and twenty poems and pictures; but its covers contain a lyric treasure such as few books, small or great, can boast of.

What renders these little songs so precious is their pure singing quality—what Matthew Arnold calls the "lyrical cry"; and the same quality appears in a really large number of exquisite lyrics scattered throughout Miss Rossetti's volumes; some of them being, perhaps, in the most ethereal and quintessential elements of song, the most perfect we have had since Shelley, whom she resembles also in her free but flawless treatment of rhythm. The peculiar

charm of these songs is as distinct and at the same time as immaterial as a perfume. They are fresh with the freshness of dewy grass, or, in their glowing brightness, like a dewdrop turned by the sun into a prism. Thoughtfulness passing into intuition, thoughtfulness that broods as well as sees, and has, like shadowed water, its mysterious depths; this, joined to an extreme yet select simplicity of phrase and a clear and liquid melody of verse—as spontaneous apparently in its outflow as a lark's trill—seems to lie at the root of her lyric art: a careful avoidance of emphasis, a subdued colour and calculated vagueness, aiding often in giving its particular tone to one of her songs—songs, as a rule, enshrining an almost scentless flower of sentiment.

Finished workmanship, as I intimated at the outset, we find in practically every poem, and workmanship of such calm and even excellence that it is not at first sight we are made aware of the extremely original, thoughtful, and intense nature which throbs so harmoniously beneath it. Even in a poem so full of sorrow and wrath and indignation as the almost matchless lyric on the German-French campaign, "To-day for Me"—a poem that seems written with a pen dipped in the hot tears of France—no surge of personal feeling disturbs the calm assurance of the rhythm, the solemn reiterance of the tolling burden of rhyme. Indeed, the more deeply or delicately felt the emotion, the more impressive or exquisite, very often, is the art. At the same time, poems like "To-day for Me" are the exception, by no means the rule, in Miss Rossetti's poetry. Something altogether less emphatic must be sought for if we are anxious to find the type, the

true representative of this mystic and remote, yet homely and simple, genius; seeing so deeply into things of the spirit and of nature, overshadowed always with something of a dark imminence of gloom, yet with so large a capacity for joy and simple pleasure; an autumnal muse perhaps, but the muse, certainly, of an autumn going down towards winter with the happy light still on it of a past, or but now scarcely passing, summer.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

1862.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

I.—SONG: WHEN I AM DEAD.

WHEN I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dew-drops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

II.—A BIRTHDAY.

MY heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

III.—UP-HILL

DOES the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

IV.—AN APPLE GATHERING.

I PLUCKED pink blossoms from mine apple-tree
And wore them all that evening in my hair:
Then in due season when I went to see
I found no apples there.

With dangling basket all along the grass
As I had come I went the self-same track:
My neighbours mocked me while they saw me pass
So empty-handed back.

Lilian and Lilias smiled in trudging by,
Their heaped-up basket teazed me like a jeer;
Sweet-voiced they sang beneath the sunset sky,
Their mother's home was near.

Plump Gertrude passed me with her basket full,
A stronger hand than hers helped it along;
A voice talked with her through the shadows cool
More sweet to me than song.

Ah Willie, Willie, was my love less worth
Than apples with their green leaves piled above?
I counted rosiest apples on the earth
Of far less worth than love.

So once it was with me you stooped to talk,
Laughing and listening in this very lane:
To think that by this way we used to walk
We shall not walk again!

I let my neighbours pass me, ones and twos
And groups; the latest said the night grew chill,
And hastened: but I loitered, while the dews
Fell fast I loitered still.

V.—AT HOME.

WHEN I was dead, my spirit turned
To seek the much-frequented house:
I passed the door, and saw my friends
Feasting beneath green orange boughs;
From hand to hand they pushed the wine,
They sucked the pulp of plum and peach;
They sang, they jested, and they laughed,
For each was loved of each.

I listened to their honest chat:
Said one: "To-morrow we shall be
Plod plod along the featureless sands
And coasting miles and miles of sea."
Said one: "Before the turn of tide
We will achieve the eyrie-seat."
Said one: "To-morrow shall be like
To-day, but much more sweet."

"To-morrow," said they, strong with hope,
And dwelt upon the pleasant way:
"To-morrow," cried they one and all,
While no one spoke of yesterday.
Their life stood full at blessed noon;
I, only I, had passed away:
"To-morrow and to-day," they cried;
I was of yesterday.

I shivered comfortless, but cast
No chill across the tablecloth;
I all-forgotten shivered, sad
To stay and yet to part how loth:
I passed from the familiar room,
I who from love had passed away,
Like the remembrance of a guest,
That tarrieth but a day.

VI.—GOBLIN MARKET.

MORNING and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy."

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips.
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
"Lie close," Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
"We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry, thirsty roots?"
"Come buy," call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
"Oh," cried Lizzie, "Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men."
Lizzie covered up her eyes,
Covered close lest they should look;
Laura reared her glossy head,
And whispered like the restless brook:
"Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds' weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes."
"No," said Lizzie: "No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,

Their evil gifts would harm us."
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes, and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
"Come buy, come buy."
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,

One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
"Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money:
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
The rat-paced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly;"—
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
"Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather."
"You have much gold upon your head,"
They answered all together:
"Buy from us with a golden curl."
She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,

Clearer than water flowed that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She sucked until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gathered up one kernel-stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
"Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Plucked from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low:
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so."
"Nay, hush," said Laura:

"Nay, hush, my sister:
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more;" and kissed her:
"Have done with sorrow;
I'll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed:
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap."

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest:

Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning,
When the first cock crowed his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homewards, said: "The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loitered still among the rushes
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still,
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill:

Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
"Come buy, come buy,"
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words:
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, "O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look:
You should not loiter longer at this brook:
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark:
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights, and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do?"

Laura turned cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
"Come buy our fruits, come buy."
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruits?
Must she no more that succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life drooped from the root:
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;

But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry:
"Come buy, come buy;"—
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen:
But when the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and grey;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay and burn
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watched for a waxing shoot,
But there came none;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run:
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:"—
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest Winter-time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter-time,

Till Laura dwindling
Seemed knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,

Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter-skelter, hurry-skurry.
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugged her and kissed her:
Squeezed and caressed her.
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers, and plates:
"Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,

Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs."—

"Good folk," said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
"Give me much and many":—
Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,"
They answered grinning:
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us."—
"Thank you," said Lizzie; "but one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits, though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee."—
They began to scratch their pates,

No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil;
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,
Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary, roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree,
White with blossoms honey-sweet,
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.

Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrupped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck, which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle,
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man

Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:
But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried, "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew,
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me:
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair:
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light, like mine, be hidden,
Your young life, like mine, be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"—
She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,

Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth
Shaking with aguish fear and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast
Writhing as one possessed, she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,
Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name
Ah! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense failed in the mortal strife:
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped waterspout

Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves;
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie, but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey,
Her breath was sweet as May,
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:

Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town):
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote:
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

I.—"YEA, I HAVE A GOODLY HERITAGE."

MY vineyard that is mine I have to keep,
Pruning for fruit the pleasant twigs and leaves.
Tend thou thy cornfield: one day thou shalt reap
In joy thy ripened sheaves.

Or if thine be an orchard, graft and prop
Food-bearing trees each watered in its place:
Or if a garden, let it yield for crop
Sweet herbs and herb of grace.—

But if my lot be sand where nothing grows?—
Nay, who hath said it? Tune a thankful psalm:
For tho' thy desert bloom not as the rose,
It yet can rear thy palm.

II.—AN ECHO FROM WILLOWWOOD.

"Oh ye, all ye that walk in willowwood."

TWO gazed into a pool, he gazed and she,
Not hand in hand, yet heart in heart, I think,
Pale and reluctant on the water's brink,
As on the brink of parting which must be.
Each eyed the other's aspect, she and he,
Each felt one hungering heart leap up and sink,
Each tasted bitterness which both must drink,
There on the brink of life's dividing sea.
Lilies upon the surface, deep below
Two wistful faces craving each for each,
Resolute and reluctant without speech:—
A sudden ripple made the faces flow
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach:
So those hearts joined, and ah! were parted so.

III.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

"In the grave, whither thou goest."

O WEARY Champion of the Cross, lie still:
Sleep thou at length the all-embracing sleep:
Long was thy sowing day, rest now and reap:
Thy fast was long, feast now thy spirit's fill.
Yea, take thy fill of love, because thy will
Chose love not in the shallows but the deep:
Thy tides were springtides, set against the neap
Of calmer souls: thy flood rebuked their rill.
Now night has come to thee—please God, of rest:
So some time must it come to every man;
To first and last, where many last are first.
Now fixed and finished thine eternal plan,
Thy best has done its best, thy worst its worst:
Thy best its best, please God, thy best its best.

IV.—A DEATH OF A FIRSTBORN.

JANUARY 14TH, 1892.

(THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.)

ONE young life lost, two happy young lives blighted,
With earthward eyes we see:
With eyes uplifted, keener, farther-sighted,
We look, O Lord, to Thee.

Grief hears a funeral knell: hope hears the ringing
Of birthday bells on high;
Faith, hope, and love make answer with soft singing,
Half carol and half cry.

Stoop to console us, Christ, Sole Consolation,
While dust returns to dust;
Until that blessed day when all Thy Nation
Shall rise up of the Just.

TIME FLIES.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

I.—JANUARY 6.

(FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.)

"LORD Babe, if Thou art He
We sought for patiently,
Where is Thy court?
Hither may prophecy and star resort;
Men heed not their report."—
"Bow down and worship, righteous man:
This Infant of a span
Is He man sought for since the world began."
"Then, Lord, accept my gold, too base a thing
For Thee, of all kings King."

"Lord Babe, despite Thy youth
I hold Thee of a truth
Both Good and Great:
But wherefore dost Thou keep so mean a state,
Low lying desolate?"—
"Bow down and worship, righteous seer:
The Lord our God is here
Approachable, Who bids us all draw near."
"Wherefore to Thee I offer frankincense,
Thou Sole Omnipotence."

"But I have only brought
Myrrh; no wise afterthought
Instructed me

To gather pearls or gems, or choice to see
Coral or ivory."—
"Not least thine offering proves thee wise:
For myrrh means sacrifice,
And He that lives, this same is He that dies."—
"Then here is myrrh: alas! yea, woe is me
That myrrh befitteth Thee."

Myrrh, frankincense and gold:
And lo! from wintry fold
Good will doth bring
A Lamb, the innocent likeness of this King
Whom stars and seraphs sing:
And lo! the bird of love, a Dove
Flutters and cooes above:
And Dove and Lamb and Babe agree in love:—
Come, all mankind, come, all creation, hither,
Come, worship Christ together.

II.—MARCH 3.

LAUGHING Life cries at the feast,—
Craving Death cries at the door,—
"Fish, or fowl or fatted beast?"—
"Come with me, thy feast is o'er."—

"Wreathe the violets."—"Watch them fade."—
"I am sunlight."—"I am shade:
I am the sun-burying west."—
"I am pleasure."—"I am rest:
Come with me, for I am best."

III.—MARCH 5.

WHERE shall I find a white rose blowing?—
Out in the garden where all sweets be.—
But out in my garden the snow was snowing
And never a white rose opened for me.
Nought but snow and a wind were blowing
And snowing.

Where shall I find a blush rose blushing?—
On the garden wall or the garden bed.—
But out in my garden the rain was rushing
And never a blush rose raised its head.
Nothing glowing, flushing or blushing;
Rain rushing.

Where shall I find a red rose budding?—
Out in the garden where all things grow.—
But out in my garden a flood was flooding
And never a red rose began to blow.
Out in a flooding what should be budding?
All flooding!

Now is winter and now is sorrow,
No roses but only thorns to-day:
Thorns will put on roses to-morrow,
Winter and sorrow scudding away.
No more winter and no more sorrow
To-morrow.

IV.—APRIL 6.

WEIGH all my faults and follies righteously,
Omissions and commissions, sin on sin;
Make deep the scale, O Lord, to weigh them in;

Yea, set the Accuser vulture-eyed to see
All loads ingathered which belong to me:
That so in life the judgment may begin.
And Angels learn how hard it is to win
One sólitary sinful soul to Thee.
I have no merits for a counterpoise:
Oh vanity my work and hastening day,
What can I answer to the accursing voice?
Lord, drop Thou in the counterscale alone
One Drop from Thine own Heart, and overweigh
My guilt, my folly, even my heart of stone.

V.—APRIL 20.

PITEOUS my rhyme is,
What while I muse of love and pain,
Of love misspent, of love in vain,
Of love that is not loved again:
And is this all then?
As long as time is
Love loveth. Time is but a span,
The dalliance space of dying man:
And is this all immortals can?
The gain were small then.

Love loves for ever,
And finds a sort of joy in pain,
And gives with nought to take again,
And loves too well to end in vain:
Is the gain small then?
Love laughs at "never,"
Outlives our life, exceeds the span
Appointed to mere mortal man:
That which love is and does and can,
Is all in all then.

VI.—MAY 14.

YOUNG girls wear flowers,
Young brides a flowery wreath,
But next we plant them
In garden plots of death.
Whose lot is best:
The maiden's curtained rest,
Or bride's whose hoped-for sweet
May yet outstrip her feet?
Ah! what are such as these
To death's sufficing ease?
He sleeps indeed who sleeps in peace
Where night and morning meet.

Dear are the blossoms
For bride's or maiden's head,
But dearer planted
Around our blessed dead.
Those mind us of decay
And joys that fade away,
These preach to us perfection,
Long love, and resurrection.
We make our graveyards fair
For spirit-like birds of air,
For Angels may be finding there
Lost Eden's own delection.

VII.—JUNE 2.

'As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

"GOLDEN haired, lily white,
Will you pluck me lilies?
Or will you show me where they grow,
Show where the limpid rill is?

But is your hair of gold or light,
And is your foot of flake or fire,
And have you wings rolled up from sight,
And songs to slake desire?"

"I pluck fresh flowers of Paradise,
Lilies and roses red,
A bending sceptre for my hand,
A crown to crown my head.
I sing my songs, I pluck my flowers
Sweet-scented from their fragrant trees:
I sing, we sing amid the bowers,
And gather palm branches."

"Is there a path to Heaven
My stumbling foot may tread?
And will you show that way to go,
That bower and blossom bed?"
"The path to Heaven is steep and straight
And scorched, but ends in shade of trees,
Where yet awhile we sing and wait,
And gather palm branches."

VIII.—JULY 5.

INNOCENT eyes not ours,
Are made to look on flowers,
Eyes of small birds and insects small:
Morn after summer morn,
The sweet rose on her thorn
Opens her bosom to them all.
The least and last of things
That soar on quivering wings,
Or crawl among the grass-blades out of sight,
Have just as clear a right
To their appointed portion of delight,
As Queens or Kings.

IX.—JULY 11.

MAN'S life is but a working day
Whose tasks are set aright:
A time to work, a time to pray,
And then a quiet night.
And then, please God, a quiet night
Where palms are green and robes are white,
A long-drawn breath, a balm for sorrow,—
And all things lovely on the morrow.

X.—JULY 16.

HAVE I not striven, my God, and watched and prayed?
Have I not wrestled in mine agony?
Wherefore dost Thou still turn Thy Face from me?
Is Thine Arm shortened that Thou canst not aid?
Thy silence breaks my heart: speak though to upbraid,
For Thy rebuke yet bids us follow Thee.
I grope and grasp not; gaze, but cannot see.
When out of sight and reach, my bed is made,
And piteous men and women cease to blame,
Whispering and wistful of my gain or loss;
Thou who for my sake once didst feel the Cross,
Lord, wilt Thou turn and look upon me then,
And in Thy glory bring to nought my shame,
Confessing me to angels and to men?

XI.—JULY 29.

THROUGH burden and heat of the day
How weary the hands and the feet,
That labour with scarcely a stay,
Through burden and heat!

Tired toiler whose sleep shall be sweet,
Kneel down, it will rest thee to pray:
Then forward, for daylight is fleet.

Cool shadows show lengthening and grey,
Cool twilight will soon be complete:—
What matters this wearisome way
Through burden and heat?

XII.—SEPTEMBER 25.

SORROW hath a double voice,
Sharp to-day but sweet to-morrow:
Wait in patience, hope, rejoice,
Tried friends of sorrow.

Pleasure hath a double taste,
Sweet to-day, but sharp to-morrow:
Friends of pleasure, rise in haste,
Make friends with sorrow.

Pleasure set aside to-day
Comes again to rule to-morrow:
Welcomed sorrow will not stay,
Farewell to sorrow!

XIII.—OCTOBER 30.

WHO is this that cometh up not alone
From the fiery-flying serpent wilderness
Leaning upon her own Beloved One,
Who is this?

Lo, the King of King's daughter, a high princess,
Going home as bride to her Husband's Throne,
Virgin queen in perfected loveliness.

Her eyes a dove's eyes and her voice a dove's moan,
  She shows like a full moon for heavenliness,
Eager saints and angels ask in heaven's zone:
  Who is this?

XIV.—NOVEMBER 16.

THE goal in sight! Look up and sing,
  Set faces full against the light,
Welcome with rapturous welcoming
  The goal in sight.

Let be the left, let be the right:
Straight forward make your footsteps ring
  A loud alarum through the night.

Death hunts you, yea, but reft of sting;
  Your bed is green, your shroud is white:
Hail! Life and Death and all that bring
  The goal in sight.

XV.—DECEMBER 5.

BURY Hope out of sight,
  No book for it and no bell;
It never could bear the light
  Even while growing and well;
Think if now it could bear
The light on its face of care
And grey scattered hair.

No grave for Hope in the earth,
  But deep in that silent soul
Which rang no bell for its birth
  And rings no funeral toll.
Cover its once bright head;
Nor odours nor tears be shed:
It lived once, it is dead.

Brief was the day of its power,
  The day of its grace how brief:
As the fading of a flower,
  As the falling of a leaf,
So brief its day and its hour:
No bud more and no bower
Or hint of a flower.

Shall many wail it? not so:
  Shall one bewail it? not one:
Thus it hath been from long ago,
  Thus it shall be beneath the sun.
O fleet sun, make haste to flee;
O rivers, fill up the sea;
O Death, set the dying free.

The sun nor loiters nor speeds,
  The rivers run as they ran,
Through clouds or through windy reeds
  All run as when all began.
Only Death turns at our cries:—
Lo, the Hope we buried with sighs
Alive in Death's eyes!

XVI.—ADVENT SUNDAY.

BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh:—go ye out
  With lighted lamps and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

It may be at the midnight black as pitch
Earth shall cast up her poor, cast up her rich.

It may be at the crowing of the cock
Earth shall upheave her depth, uproot her rock.

For lo, the Bridegroom fetcheth home the Bride:
His Hands are Hands she knows, she knows His Side.

Like pure Rebekah at the appointed place,
Veiled she unveils her face to meet His Face.

Like great Queen Esther in her triumphing,
She triumphs in the presence of her King.

His Eyes are as a Dove's, and she's Dove-eyed;
He knows His lovely mirror, sister, Bride.

He speaks with Dove-voice of exceeding love,
And she with love-voice of an answering Dove.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh:—go we out
With lamps ablaze and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

XVII.—EASTER EVEN.

THE tempest over and gone, the calm begun.
Lo, "it is finished," and the Strong Man sleeps:
All stars keep vigil watching for the sun,
The moon her vigil keeps.

A garden full of silence and of dew,
Beside a virgin cave and entrance stone:
Surely a garden full of Angels too,
Wondering, on watch, alone.

They who cry "Holy, Holy, Holy," still
Veiling their faces round God's Throne above,
May well keep vigil on this heavenly hill
And cry their cry of love.

Adoring God in His new mystery
Of Love more deep than hell, more strong than death;
Until the day break and the shadows flee,
The Shaking and the Breath.

SING-SONG.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

I.

LOVE me,—I love you,
Love me, my baby;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Sing as it may be.

Mother's arms under you,
Her eyes above you;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Love me,—I love you.

II.

Heartsease in my garden bed,
With sweetwilliam white and red,
Honeysuckle on my wall:—
Heartsease blossoms in my heart
When sweet William comes to call,
But it withers when we part,
And the honey-trumpets fall.

III.

What are heavy? sea-sand and sorrow:
What are brief? to-day and to-morrow:
What are frail? Spring blossoms and youth:
What are deep? the ocean and truth.

IV.

The days are clear,
Day after day,
When April's here,
That leads to May

And June
Must follow soon:
Stay, June, stay!—
If only we could stop the moon
And June!

v.

Twist me a crown of wind-flowers;
That I may fly away
To hear the singers at their song,
And players at their play.

Put on your crown of wind-flowers:
But whither would you go?
Beyond the surging of the sea
And the storms that blow.

Alas! your crown of wind-flowers
Can never make you fly:
I twist them in a crown to-day,
And to-night they die.

vi.

I planted a hand
And there came up a palm
I planted a heart
And there came up balm.

Then I planted a wish,
But there sprang a thorn,
While heaven frowned with thunder
And earth sighed forlorn.

VII.

Roses blushing red and white
For delight;
Honeysuckle wreaths above,
For love;
Dim sweet-scented heliotrope,
For hope;
Shining lilies tall and straight,
For royal state;
Dusky pansies, let them be
For memory;
With violets of fragrant breath,
For death.

VIII.

When a mounting skylark sings
In the sunlit summer morn,
I know that heaven is up on high,
And on earth are fields of corn.

But when a nightingale sings
In the moonlit summer even,
I know not if earth is merely earth,
Only that heaven is heaven.

IX.

"Good bye in fear, good bye in sorrow,
Good bye, and all in vain,
Never to meet again, my dear—"
"Never to part again."
"Good bye to-day, good bye to-morrow,
Good bye till earth shall wane,
Never to meet again, my dear—"
"Never to part again."

Ellen O'Leary.

1831—1889.

Miss O'Leary, the Fenian poet, belongs to a type of writers better known in Ireland than in England. Her verses are songs and ballads in the old sense of the word rather than poems and lyrics. Living in a country where the populace are strongly moved by great fundamental passions, she was able to find an audience for her tender and simple rhymes. The streets of her native Tipperary have echoed more than once to some ballad of hers about emigrants and their sorrows, or like theme, sung by the ballad-singers from their little strips of fluttering paper. *The Commercial Journal*, *The Irishman*, and the Fenian organ *The Irish People*, helped also to spread her verse through the country. Her poetry, and the poetry of Casey, and Kickham's "Sally Kavanagh" and his three or four ballads, made up, indeed, the whole literary product of the Fenian agitation. "Young Ireland" days had brought their reaction of silence. Simple verse could still, however, find an audience; as it, indeed, always can in Ireland, where the ballad age has not yet gone by. It may be that a troubled history and the smouldering unrest of agitation and conspiracy are good for the making of ballads. If this be so, Miss O'Leary lived amid surroundings of an ideal kind, for all her life she was deep in the councils of Fenianism. Her

brother, Mr. John O'Leary, is now the most important survivor of the company of men who led the forlorn hope of 1864. O'Leary, Kickham, and Luby formed what was known as the Triumvirate under James Stephens, who bore the singular title of "Chief Executive." In 1864 Stephens, O'Leary, Luby, and Kickham were arrested. The escape of Stephens was at once planned, and carried out successfully. Miss O'Leary was the only woman told of the project. From this on she was constantly employed by Stephens carrying messages. While her brother was awaiting trial, she obeyed without murmur a command that sent her to Paris. Her brother might have been condemned to penal servitude in her absence, but she put her cause before all else. She was back in time, however, to hear the sentence pronounced, and to listen to his characteristic speech: "I have been found guilty of treason or treason felony. Treason is a foul crime. The poet Dante consigned traitors, I believe, to the ninth circle of hell; but what kind of traitors? Traitors against king, against country, against friends, against benefactors. England is not my country, and I have betrayed no friend, no benefactors. Sidney and Emmet were legal traitors."

It is impossible to describe Miss O'Leary's life without touching on that of her brother, for he was the most powerful influence she met with. His imprisonment did not, however, abate her political activity. She hid more than one rebel for whom the Government was searching; and when it became necessary to get James Stephens out of the country, raised £200 by a mortgage on some small property she had, to charter a vessel. In 1867, the

movement having failed, she went to her native town, and lived there until her brother's return in 1885. He had been five years in prison and fifteen in banishment, but returned still hopeful for Ireland, still waiting the day of deliverance. From 1885 until her death she lived with her brother in Dublin, and their house became a centre of literary endeavour. A little circle of writers who have sought to carry on the ballad literature of Ireland according to the tradition of 1848 drew much of their inspiration from the teaching of Mr. O'Leary and his sister, and many of their facts and legends from the books that filled every corner and crevice of Mr. O'Leary's rooms. Indeed, no influence in modern Ireland has been more ennobling than that of these two Fenians. Driven by the force of events into hostility to all the dominant parties in Irish politics, they concentrated their influence upon giving to all they met a loftier public spirit and more devoted patriotism. Unionist or Nationalist, Conservative or Liberal, it was nearly all one to them, if they thought you loved Ireland and were ready to seek her prosperity by setting the moral law above all the counsels of expediency. On this last they ever dwelt with most uncompromising insistence.

Miss O'Leary died in 1889, just when she had completed the correction of a collected edition of her poems. It is from this volume, published in 1890 by Sealey, Bryers, and Walker (Lower Abbey Street, Dublin), that the selection has been made.

Poetry such as hers belongs to a primitive country and a young literature. It is exceedingly simple, both in thought and expression. Its very simplicity and

sincerity have made it, like much Irish verse, unequal; for when the inspiration fails, the writer has no art to fall back upon. Nor does it know anything of studied adjective and subtle observation. To it the grass is simply green and the sea simply blue; and yet it has, in its degree, the sacred passion of true poetry.

W. B. YEATS.

SONGS AND BALLADS.

ELLEN O'LEARY.

I.—TO GOD AND IRELAND TRUE.

I SIT beside my darling's grave,
Who in the prison died,
And tho' my tears fall thick and fast
I think of him with pride:
Ay, softly fall my tears like dew,
For one to God and Ireland true.

"I love my God o'er all," he said,
"And then I love my land,
And next I love my Lily sweet,
Who pledged me her white hand:
To each—to all—I'm ever true,
To God, to Ireland, and to you.

No tender nurse his hard bed smoothed,
Or softly raised his head;
He fell asleep and woke in heaven
Ere I knew he was dead;
Yet why should I my darling rue?
He was to God and Ireland true.

Oh! 'tis a glorious memory,
I'm prouder than a queen,
To sit beside my hero's grave,
And think on what has been;
And, oh my darling, I am true
To God—to Ireland—and to you.

II.—THE DEAD WHO DIED FOR IRELAND.

THE dead who died for Ireland;
Let not their memory die,
But solemn and bright, like stars at night,
Be they throned for aye on high.

The dead who died for Ireland;
The noble, gallant Three,
Whose last fond prayer on the gallows' stair
Was for Ireland's liberty.

The dead who died for Ireland!
In the lonely prison cell;
Far, far apart from each kindred heart;
Of their death-pangs none can tell.

The dead who died for Ireland!
In exile—poor—in pain;
Dreaming sweet dreams of the hills and streams
They never should see again.

The dead who died for Ireland!
Let not their memory die,
But solemn and bright, like stars at night,
Be they throned for aye on high.

III.—A LEGEND OF TYRONE.[1]

AMONG those green hills where O'Neill in his pride
Ruled in high state, with his fair English bride.
A quaint cottage stood, till swept down by some gale;
And of that vanished home the old wives tell this tale.

* * * *

Crouched round a bare hearth in hard, frosty weather,
Three lone, helpless weans cling close together;
Tangled those gold locks, once bonnie and bright—
There's no one to fondle the baby to-night.

"My mammie I want! Oh! my mammie I want!"
The big tears stream down with low wailing chaunt;
Sweet Ely's slight arms enfold the gold head;
"Poor weeny Willie, sure mammie is dead—

And daddie is crazy from drinking all day,
Come down, holy angels, and take us away!"
Eily and Eddie keep kissing and crying—
Outside the weird winds are sobbing and sighing.

All in a moment the children are still,
Only a quick coo of gladness from Will.
The sheiling no longer seems empty and bare,
For, clothed in white raiment, the mother stands there.

They gather around her, they cling to her dress;
She rains down soft kisses for each shy caress,
Her light, loving touches smooth out tangled locks,
And pressed to her bosom the baby she rocks.

He lies in his cot, there's a fire on the hearth;
To Eily and Eddy 'tis heaven on earth,
For mother's deft fingers have been everywhere,
She lulls them to rest in the low *sugaun* chair.

They gaze open-eyed, then the eyes gently close,
As petals fold into the heart of a rose;
But ope soon again in awe, love, but not fear,
And fondly they murmur, "Our mammie is here!"

She lays them down softly, she wraps them around,
They lie in sweet slumbers, she starts at a sound!
The cock loudly crows, and the spirits away—
The drunkard steals in at the dawning of day.

Again and again 'tween the dark and the dawn
Glides in the dead mother to nurse Willie bawn,[2]
Or is it an angel who sits by the hearth?
An angel in heaven, a mother on earth.

IV.—HOME TO CARRIGLEA.

A Ballad.

MY Noney, lay your work aside
For I have news to tell:
I met a friend, a dear old friend—
We've known him long and well;
When you were but a toddling babe
He danced you on his knee;
But oh! 'twas in the good old times,
At home in Carriglea.

Just now amidst the busy crowd,
As I was toiling on
With drooping heart and flagging steps,
His mild glance on me shone;
His voice seemed like an angel's voice,
With such sweet sympathy
He talked of all the good old times
At home in Carriglea.

He clasped my hand in his warm grasp,
His kind eyes filled with tears,
To see me look so thin and wan
After those weary years;
And gazing in his face I thought
I ne'er had crossed the sea,
But still was playing hide and seek
At home in Carriglea.

Once more I saw its rose-crowned porch,
And the little stream close by,
Where oft we watched the young *brikeens*[3]
Or paddled on the sly;
Or in the sunny summer days
Climbed up the old oak tree;
Oh! we were happy children then,
At home in Carriglea.

How softly on our curly locks
My mother's hands would rest,
She'd pat each sunburnt, rosy cheek,
And press us to her breast;
You, Noney dear, when tired of play,
Would nestle lovingly
Within her tender sheltering arms
At home in Carriglea.

When you were only six years old
There came a woeful change,
Dear mother, always sad and pale,
Poor father wild and strange,—
He'd rave of cruel landlords,
And curse their tyranny.
His proud heart broke, the day he left
His home in Carriglea.

And with the falling of the leaf
My mother faded, too;
And as I watched her hour by hour
More and more weak she grew;
The night she died, she blessed us both
So sadly, tenderly,
That all the kindly neighbours wept
At home in Carriglea.

Oh! may God bless the faithful friends
Who, in the hour of need,
Thronged round the lonely orphan girls.
Oh! they were friends indeed:
And he, the truest, kindest, best,
Has come across the sea,
To take a wife and sister home—
Home, home to Carriglea.

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1 The Legend of the Dead Mother, as told among the hills of Tyrone, is simple and very homely. The tender mother and fond wife dies; the father in despair turns to drinking and neglects his little ones. The mother, still watching over her babies, comes back in the gloaming, again and again, to succour and fondle them. They tell the neighbours to take them to the priest. In reply to his incredulous questions, their only answer is another question, "Wouldn't we know our own mammie?"

2 Bán, *i.e.* fair, in Irish. 3 Little trout.

Isa (Craig) Knox.

1831—1903.

Mrs. Knox, whose maiden name was Isa Craig, under which she became well known, was born in Edinburgh on October 17th, 1831. She began at an early age to contribute to newspapers and magazines, and her poetical contributions to the *Scotsman*, signed "Isa," attracted attention, and led to her being employed in writing for that journal literary reviews and articles on social questions, in which already she took the greatest interest. In 1856 her first volume of poems was issued by the Messrs. Blackwood of Edinburgh, and was received with much favour. In 1857 she came to London to assist Mr. Hastings in organising the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. She acted as Secretary and literary assistant until her marriage with her cousin, Mr. John Knox, who was engaged in business in the City. Prior to this, however, she had won the first place in the competition (against 620 rivals) for her ode on Burns, on the occasion of the Burns Centenary. So little did she expect to win the prize that she was spending the day at a distance, and was not present when her ode was read by Mr. Phelps with fine effect to listening thousands in the Crystal Palace.

Shortly before her marriage she began to contribute to the magazines founded by Mr. Alexander

Strahan,—*Good Words* and the *Sunday Magazine*,—and, for a time, in the earlier days of the *Argosy*, she acted as its editor. In 1865 "Duchess Agnes and Other Poems" was published by Mr. Strahan, and added to her reputation.

Isa Craig Knox's poems are characterised not only by true and natural feeling, but by remarkably picturesque touches. She excels in pictures, and can command atmosphere. "Duchess Agnes" admirably illustrates this in many passages, and we may refer also to the "Brides of Quair" and to "The Thames." We recall, too, a very remarkable poem which appeared in the *Argosy* entitled "The Vision of Sheikh Hamil," in which, without affectation of knowledge or display of pedantic learning, we have the whole spirit not only of Eastern life, but of Arab love and devotion, set in a frame of the most picturesque touches. The Mohammedan religion and worship affords her the finest medium for enforcing on Christian readers the true law of charity; for the unspeakable grief of the Sheikh at the loss of his much-loved wife touches, and cannot but touch, the sensitive reader to the quick. Seldom have we read a poem in which local colour and atmosphere were better preserved, and yet in which the law of common sympathy was more effectively vindicated.

As being in respect of extent her most important poem, we may, perhaps, be allowed to make a short quotation from "Duchess Agnes," in proof of what we have said above. Agnes, the wife of the son of the Grand Duke of Bavaria, suffers death under an accusation of witchcraft, from which her husband is unable to save her. This is a part of one of her

monologues while in the prison, waiting for judgment and sentence :—

"Remember Thou Thy three days in the grave,
O my Lord Christ, and hasten to this door,
And open it, the way into the light.
Blot out those days of darkness evermore,
When in my bitterness I cried for death
To come and take me from Thee—cried to Thee.
That I might be as though I had not been
Forgive the cry—forgive the bitter cry,
O Mother Heart, so near the heart of God,
What if a little child should beat thy breast
In its blind pain, thou wouldst not punish it
By putting it far from Thee with its pain!"

Mrs. Knox wrote some lyrics which for freshness of feeling and felicity of movement hold a place of their own; and in her "Songs of Consolation," published in 1874, showed her ability to write true lyrics of the spiritual life. Many attempt this class of composition but few succeed in it.

Like so many other authors whose original and natural gift is for verse, and who have turned to prose-writing, Mrs. Knox in more recent years did little in poetry, but made a reputation for herself in prose-fiction. Several of her novels appeared in the Messrs. Cassell's magazines and elsewhere, and enjoyed a wide popularity there. She had fair constructive powers, a firm hold on character within certain limits, and invariably wrote in a simple and attractive style. Besides, she never forgot to insinuate a good moral influence into her story, if she did not always plainly enforce a moral lesson. "Esther West" is, perhaps, the most effective and popular of her prose stories. Mrs. Knox wrote a good deal for children, displaying the gift of a light and

pleasant manner of communicating knowledge. Her "Little Folks' History of England" met with wide acceptance, and the same may be said of her "Tales on the Parables." Mrs. Knox died on the 23rd of December, 1903.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS.

ISA (CRAIG) KNOX.

I.—ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF BURNS.

WE hail, this morn,
A century's noblest birth;
A Poet peasant-born,
Who more of Fame's immortal dower
Unto his country brings,
Than all her kings!

As lamps high set
Upon some earthly eminence,—
And to the gazer brighter thence
Than the sphere-lights they flout,—
Dwindle in distance and die out,
While no star waneth yet;
So through the past's far-reaching night,
Only the star-souls keep their light.

A gentle boy,—
With moods of sadness and of mirth,
Quick tears and sudden joy,—
Grew up beside the peasant's hearth.
His father's toil he shares!
But half his mother's cares
From his dark searching eyes,
Too swift to sympathise,
Hid in her heart she bears.

At early morn,
His father calls him to the field;
Through the stiff soil that clogs his feet,
Chill rain, and harvest heat,

He plods all day; returns at eve outworn,
To the rude fare a peasant's lot doth yield;—
To what else was he born?

The God-made King
Of every living thing;
(For his great heart in love could hold them all;)
The dumb eyes meeting his by hearth and stall,—
Gifted to understand!—
Knew it and sought his hand;—
And the most timorous creature had not fled
Could she his heart have read,
Which fain all feeble things had blessed and sheltered.

To Nature's feast,—
Who knew her noblest guest
And entertained him best,—
Kingly he came. Her chambers of the east
She draped with crimson and with gold,
And poured her pure joy-wines
For him the poet-souled.
For him her anthem rolled,
From the storm-wind among the winter pines,
Down to the slenderest note
Of a love-warble from the linnet's throat.

But when begins
The array for battle, and the trumpet blows,
A king must leave the feast, and lead the fight.
And with its mortal foes,—
Grim gathering hosts of sorrows and of sins,—
Each human soul must close.

And Fame her trumpet blew
Before him; wrapped him in her purple state;
And made him mark for all the shafts of Fate,
That henceforth round him flew.

Though he may yield
Hard-pressed, and wounded fall
Forsaken on the field;
His regal vestments soiled;
His crown of half its jewels spoiled;
He is a king for all,
Had he but stood aloof!
Had he arrayed himself in armour proof
Against temptation's darts!
So yearn the good;—so those the world calls wise,
With vain presumptuous hearts,
Triumphant moralise.

Of martyr-woe
A sacred shadow on his memory rests;
Tears have not ceased to flow;
Indignant grief yet stirs impetuous breasts,
To think,—above that noble soul brought low,
That wise and soaring spirit fooled, enslaved,—
Thus, thus he had been saved!

It might not be!
That heart of harmony
Had been too rudely rent:
Its silver chords, which any hand could wound,
By no hand could be tuned,
Save by the Maker of the instrument,
Its every string who knew,
And from profaning touch His heavenly gift withdrew.

Regretful love
His country fain would prove,
By grateful honours lavished on his grave;
Would fain redeem her blame
That He so little at her hands can claim,
Who unrewarded gave
To her his life-bought gift of song and fame.

The land he trod
Hath now become a place of pilgrimage;
Where dearer are the daisies of the sod
That could his song engage.
The hoary hawthorn, wreathed
Above the bank on which his limbs he flung
While some sweet plaint he breathed;
The streams he wandered near;
The maidens whom he loved; the songs he sung;—
All, all are dear!

The arch blue eyes,—
Arch but for love's disguise,—
Of Scotland's daughters, soften at his strain;
Her hardy sons, sent forth across the main
To drive the ploughshare through earth's virgin soils,
Lighten with it their toils;
And sister-lands have learn'd to love the tongue
In which such songs are sung.

For doth not Song
To the whole world belong?
Is it not given wherever tears can fall,
Wherever hearts can melt, or blushes glow,
Or mirth and sadness mingle as they flow
A heritage to all?

II.—THE BALLAD OF THE BRIDES OF QUAIR.

A STILLNESS crept about the house;
At evenfall, in noon-tide glare,
Upon the silent hills looked forth
The many-windowed House of Quair.

The peacock on the terrace screamed;
Browsed on the lawn the timid hare;
The great trees grew i' the avenue,
Calm by the sheltered House of Quair.

The pool was still; around its brim
The alders sickened all the air;
There came no murmur from the streams,
Though nigh flowed Leithen, Tweed, and Quair.

The days hold on their wonted pace,
And men to court and camp repair
Their part to fill, for good or ill,
While women keep the House of Quair.

And one is clad in widow's weeds,
And one is maiden-like and fair,
And day by day they seek the paths
About the lonely fields of Quair.

To see the trout leap in the streams,
The summer clouds reflected there,
The maiden loves in pensive dreams
To hang o'er silver Tweed and Quair.

Within, in pall-black velvet clad,
Sits stately in her oaken chair—
A stately dame of ancient name—
The Mother of the House of Quair.

Her daughter broiders by her side,
With heavy drooping golden hair,
And listens to her frequent plaint,—
"Ill fare the Brides that come to Quair."

"For more than one hath lived in pine,
And more than one hath died of care,
And more than one hath sorely sinned,
Left lonely in the House of Quair."

"Alas! and ere thy father died
I had not in his heart a share,
And now—may God forfend her ill—
Thy brother brings his Bride to Quair!"

She came: they kissed her in the hall,
They kissed her on the winding stair,
They led her to her chamber high,
The fairest in the House of Quair.

They bade her from the window look,
And mark the scene how passing fair,
Among whose ways the quiet days
Would linger o'er the wife of Quair.

"'*Tis* fair," she said on looking forth,
"But what although 'twere bleak and bare"—
She looked the love she did not speak,
And broke the ancient curse of Quair.—

"Where'er he dwells, where'er he goes,
His dangers and his toils I share."
What need be said—she was not one
Of the ill-fated Brides of Quair!

III.—NEVER TO KNOW.

ONE within in a crimson glow,
Silently sitting;
One without on the falling snow,
Wearily flitting;
Never to know
That one looked out with yearning sighs,
While one looked in with wistful eyes,
And went unwitting.

What came of the one without, that so
Wearily wended?
Under the stars and under the snow
His journey ended!
Never to know
That the answer came to those wistful eyes,
But passed away in those yearning sighs,
With night winds blended.

What came of the one within, that so
Yearned forth with sighing?
More sad, to my thinking, her fate, the glow
Drearily dying;
Never to know
That for a moment her lite was nigh,
And she knew it not and it passed her by,
Recall denying.

These were two hearts that long ago—
Dreaming and waking—
Each to a poet revealed its woe,
Wasting and breaking;
Never to know
That if each to other had but done so,
Both had rejoiced in the crimson glow,
And one had not lain 'neath the stars and snow
Forsaken—forsaking!

IV.—THE WOODRUFFE.

THOU art the flower of grief to me,
'Tis in thy flavor!
Thou keepest the scent of memory,
A sickly savor.
In the moonlight, under the orchard tree,
Thou wert plucked and given to me,
For a love favor.

In the moonlight, under the orchard tree,
Ah, cruel flower!
Thou wert plucked and given to me,
While a fruitless shower
Of blossoms rained on the ground where grew
The woodruffe bed all wet with dew,
In the witching hour.

Under the orchard tree that night
Thy scent was sweetness,
And thou, with thy small star clusters bright,
Of pure completeness,
Shedding a pearly lustre bright,
Seemed as I gazed in the meek moonlight
A gift of meetness.

"It keeps the scent for years," said he
(And thou hast kept it);
"And when you scent it, think of me."
(He could not mean thus bitterly.)
Ah! I had swept it
Into the dust where dead things rot,
Had I then believed his love was not
What I have wept it.

Between the leaves of this holy book,
O flower undying!
A worthless and withered weed in look,

I keep thee lying.
The bloom of my life with thee was plucked,
And a close-pressed grief its sap hath sucked,
Its strength updrying.
Thy circles of leaves, like pointed spears,
My heart pierce often;
They enter, it inly bleeds, no tears
The hid wounds soften;
Yet one will I ask to bury thee
In the soft white folds of my shroud with me,
Ere they close my coffin.

V.—THE ROOT OF LOVE.

UNTO a goodly tree—
A rose-tree—in the garden of my heart,
Grew up my love for thee!
Truth for its spreading root,
That drew the sweetest virtue of the soil
Up to the freshest shoot.
My tree was richly clad;
All generous thoughts and fancies burst the bud,
And every leaf was glad.
Then last of all, the flower,
The perfect flower of love, herself proclaimed
And ruled from hour to hour.
There came a thunder rain,
But for each full-blown bloom it scattered down,
Fresh buds it opened twain.
There came a wind that reft
Both leaf and flower, and broke both branch and stem;
Only the root was left.
The root was left, and so
The living rose lay hidden till the time
When the sweet south should blow.

VI.—WIND AND STARS.

THE stars are shining fixt and bright,
I stand upon the windy height,
Alone with sorrow and the night.

O stars so high, from earth apart,
Ye are the hopes that stirred my heart;
O wind, its beating wings thou art.

The wind may rave, the starry spheres
Unheeding shine, nor moved by fears
Nor shaken into trembling tears.

O hush, wild heart, regarded not,
Sink to the level of thy lot,
In pity sink, and be forgot.

VII.—SONG.

A GREENNESS o'er my vision passed,
A freshness o'er my brain,
Rose up as when I saw them last
The glad green hills again.

Amid the streets' bewildering roar,
I heard the rushing stirs
Of vagrant breezes running o'er
The dark tops of the firs.

Far round, the wide and swooning view
The bound of chained heights;
Far off, the dales my footsteps knew,
With all their green delights;

Far down, the river winding through
The valley, silver white;
Far up, amid the cloudless blue,
The slow sail of the kite.

A greenness o'er my vision passed,
A freshness o'er my brain,
Rose up as when I saw them last
The glad green hills again.

VIII.—THAMES.

I.

A GLIMPSE of the river! it glimmers
Through the stems of the beeches;
Through the screen of the willows it shimmers
In long winding reaches;
Flowing so softly that scarcely
It seems to be flowing,
But the reeds of the low little islands
Are bent to its going;
And soft as the breath of a sleeper
Its heaving and sighing,
In the coves where the fleets of the lilies
At anchor are lying.
It looks as if fallen asleep
In the lap of the meadows, and smiling
Like a child in the grass, dreaming deep
Of the flowers and their golden beguiling.

II.

A glimpse of the river! it glooms
Underneath the black arches,
Across it the broad shadow looms,
And the eager crowd marches;
Where, washing the feet of the city,
Strong and swift it is flowing;
On its bosom the ships of the nations
Are coming and going;
Heavy laden it labours and spends,
In a great strain of duty,
The power that was gathered and nursed
In the calm and the beauty.

Like thee, noble river, like thee,
Let our lives in beginning and ending,
Fair in their gathering be,
And great in the time of their spending.

IX.—SHADOW.

IT falls before, it follows behind,
Darkest still when the day is bright;
No light without the shadow we find,
And never shadow without the light.

From our shadow we cannot flee away;
It walks when we walk, it runs when we run;
But it tells which way to look for the sun;
We may turn our backs on it any day.

Ever mingle the light and shade
That make this human world so dear;
Sorrow of joy is ever made,
And what were a hope without a fear?

A morning shadow o'er youth is cast,
Warning from pleasure's dazzling snare;
A shadow lengthening across the past,
Fixes our fondest memories there.

One shadow there is, so dark, so drear,
So broad we see not the brightness round it;
Yet 'tis but the dark side of the sphere
Moving into the light unbounded.

Harriet Eleanor Hamilton-King.

1840.

Harriet Eleanor Hamilton-King, daughter of Admiral W. A. Baillie Hamilton, was born at Edinburgh, February 10th, 1840. From her sixth year to the time of her marriage most of her life was spent between London and Blackheath; and she was never out of England until 1876, difficult as this is to realise when we consider the absolute familiarity with Italy which would be taken for granted by any reader of "The Disciples." As a matter of fact, her "guides" to that country were Murray's handbooks, and the imaginative, the shaping, the realising faculty which she possesses in a remarkable degree.

In 1863 Miss Hamilton married Mr. Henry S. King, and all her married life was spent at the Manor House, Chigwell, Essex. After her husband's death she removed, with her children, to another part of the county.

The first poem Miss Hamilton gave to the world was that which appears as "Aspromonte" in the little volume published in 1869. It came out in the *Observer* under the name of "Garibaldi at Varignano." The "Aspromote" volume consists purely of early work, characterized, in the opinion of the present writer, not only by promise, but by certain qualities which still mark Mrs. King's manner.

The inspiration of much of the poetry in this book,

as well as in the whole of "The Disciples," is the love for Italy in her suffering, in her struggling, in her wrestling to win back her lost birthright of freedom. The defeat of Garibaldi, the hero "a prisoner to his own," the hero whose "laurel leaves have sharpened into thorns," is the subject of "Aspromonte," a poem marked by nobleness of sympathy and by much beauty of expression. And the singer celebrates more than the checking and the galling of Garibaldi; she sings how at last must come the "rose-coloured Republic of Christ."

"The Execution of Felice Orsini" has beauty; but it is, I think, injured by the fault one might expect to find in young work—want of condensation. But the book shows Mrs. King's style formed, if not matured; so much so that such a poem, for instance, as "Many Voices" might have been written by her this very year. Several of the poems in the book are purely English.

"The Disciples" has, even apart from its place in Mrs. King's work, a special interest on account of its having been written at the request of Mazzini. But he never saw the completed book, the sheets of which were laid at his dead feet, instead of in his living hand. The "pressure of claims and voices from without," or the "overmastering constancy of pain," felt, when at last the song was free to come forth, to have been God's laying of silence on the poet "by tender tokens irresistible," had kept back the fulfilment of the promise for nine years; and then rapidly, almost hurriedly, the book came forth, and at once touched the hearts of many. I suppose its ten editions place it in the category of "popular books."

The fighters for Italian liberty are to Mrs. King the saints, the high ones of God; their struggle sacred, their persons holy. The book is full of the glorification not merely of noble deed, but of brave endurance, of the bearing of suffering, of the facing of martyrdom. To Ugo Bassi, from whom the most important poem in the book is named, has come the consecration. Marked out for persecution as one who dares to tell the truth, he has, after much suffering, worked quietly as a Barnabite friar, relieving pain by the very magic of his presence, and sending home the comfort of the sons of consolation in life and on voice, until the day comes when the black robe of the friar is exchanged for the scarlet of the deliverer, which will one day take a deeper dye in his own heart-blood; and the shadow of martyrdom falls upon him, until at last the great thing itself carries him nearer to the breast of God. Here I may say that Mrs. King's belief is that the way and the only way to heaven is the Cross; that the blessing is for those who hunger and thirst, and who watch for the Bridegroom, not wrapt in the goodness and the sweetness of the best and the sweetest here. She believes that suffering has a fruit and a recompense in itself quite irrespective of our will, and that such a thing as being without chastisement, were that possible, would mark the being unloved of God.

Mrs. King was quite aware that the historical narrative in "Ugo Bassi" was frequently injurious to the poem; but she chose to give it for the sake of clearness. Perhaps she has left it thus open to question whether "The Disciples," as a whole, is a poem, or whether it is not rather a work, in which there is much poetry, and a good deal of metrical

prose. At any rate, in my opinion, the power shown in the book is that of the lyric poet, not of the epic.

To many the "Sermon in the Hospital"—the "Sermon" put into the mouth of "Ugo Bassi"—has been felt to be the gem of the book; and accordingly it was, a few years since, issued in a cheap form. Among the shorter poems in the volume is one named from "Jacopo Ruffini," Mazzini's earliest and dearest friend, who knowing how the drug given him in prison was of subtle might to "loosen the bonds of will," and aware that his power of resistance might be so far destroyed that in irresponsible weakness he might betray his friend, ended his own life.

> ". . . this new, subtle stealing of the brain,
> What answer have I to it but to take
> Presumptuously Thy angel's sword, and make
> Mine own hand sin against myself?"

It is a noble and beautiful poem.

"A Book of Dreams" was more sheerly poetry than "The Disciples." We have the delight in beauty, in beauty for its own sake; the revelling in the wonder of flowers, which Mrs. King can write of as very few can; the charm of colour, of sound, of sensuous exquisiteness. But the sterner side is to her the greater. In "Awake" she bids goodbye to the magic of dreamland; for, sweet as is the sweetness of dreams, the better part, she is sure, is to lead the strenuous life of the worker, and amid the "shadowy gain" in dreamland "some sweet and common pain" may have already been lost. Not dreams, but prayer, she feels, bring nearer to the beloved lost; and the cry is to come back to children,

to friends, to a world needing singers, "like church-bells clear and strong."

I do not think Mrs. King has done anything which for sustained flight of imagination and subtle, delicate beauty of expression equals her "Ballad of the Midnight Sun" in "Ballads of the North." There seems to me to be in it that something which is rather felt than defined, even were its definition possible; that sort of haunting beauty which one finds now and then, as in Stevenson's—

> "Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
> And the hunter home from the hill;"

and in Dobell's—

> "O Keith of Ravelston,
> The sorrows of thy line."

I may give one instance of this :—

> "There was a twitter of building birds
> In the blackthorn bower,
> *All broken from bare to gossamer*
> *In an hour.*"

The italics are mine.

In "The Haunted Czar," and "Dives" specially, the thought that sinning is more pitiable than suffering is nobly worked out—the conviction that the inflicter of pain is in deeper need of sympathy than his victim.

"Working Girls in London" is a gentle, delicate expression of that sympathy with the white slaves of the great city, for whom some, thank God, are pleading with powerful voice. "The First of June" is an exquisite lyric of joy after pain; of the reunion of wedded souls in a fair land that is earth and is heaven too. "The Crocus" should find a place in every collection of flower-poems.

Mrs. King's treatment of flowers is a special feature of her poetry, and very many instances might be given of her power of describing them. She has also the faculty of calling up a certain atmosphere by subtle, delicate touches: this is conspicuous in the poem above mentioned—"The First of June."

To the present writer, Mrs. King's genius appears to be essentially lyrical, and her best work to be done in lyric measures, as in most of her later poems. She has her own place among our latter-day poets by virtue of her own gifts, given in her own manner; and her gifts and her manner of giving them place her, I think, not in a low room among those whose songs—

> "Walk up and down our earthly slopes,
> Companioned by diviner hopes."

Since the above writing, Mrs. King has published "The Prophecy of Westminster, and Other Poems" (1895), and "The Hours of the Passion, and Other Poems" (1902).

E. H. HICKEY.

THE DISCIPLES.

1878.

HARRIET ELEANOR HAMILTON-KING

I.

UGO BASSI.

(III.)

(1848.)

Now I heard
Fra Ugo Bassi preach. For though in Rome
He held no public ministry this year,
On Sundays in the hospital he took
His turn in preaching, at the service held
Where five long chambers, lined with suffering folk,
Converged, and in the midst an altar stood,
By which on feast-days stood the priest, and spoke,
And I remember how, one day in March,
When all the air was thrilling with the spring,
And even the sick people in their beds
Felt, though they could not see it, he stood there;
Looking down all the lines of weary life,
Still for a little under the sweet voice,
And spoke this sermon to them, tenderly,
As it was written down by one who heard:
"I am the True Vine," said our Lord, and Ye,
"My Brethren, are the Branches;" and that Vine,
Then first uplifted in its place, and hung
With its first purple grapes, since then has grown,
Until its green leaves gladden half the world,
And from its countless clusters rivers flow
For healing of the nations, and its boughs
Innumerable stretch through all the earth,

Ever increasing, ever each entwined
With each, all living from the Central Heart.
And you and I, my brethren, live and grow,
Branches of that immortal human Stem.

Let us consider now this life of the Vine,
Whereof we are partakers: we shall see
Its way is not of pleasure nor of ease.
It groweth not like the wild trailing weeds
Whither it willeth, flowering here and there;
Or lifting up proud blossoms to the sun,
Kissed by the butterflies, and glad for life,
And glorious in their beautiful array;
Or running into lovely labyrinths
Of many forms and many fantasies,
Rejoicing in its own luxuriant life.

The Flower of the Vine is but a little thing,
The least part of its life;—you scarce could tell
It ever had a flower; the fruit begins
Almost before the flower has had its day.
And as it grows, it is not free to heaven,
But tied to a stake; and if its arms stretch out,
It is but crosswise, also forced and bound;
And so it draws out of the hard hill-side,
Fixed in its own place, its own food of life;
And quickens with it, breaking forth in bud,
Joyous and green, and exquisite of form,
Wreathed lightly into tendril, leaf, and bloom.
Yea, the grace of the green vine makes all the land
Lovely in spring-time; and it still grows on
Faster, in lavishness of its own life;
Till the fair shoots begin to wind and wave
In the blue air, and feel how sweet it is.
But so they leave it not: the husbandman

Comes early, with the pruning-hooks and shears,
And strips it bare of all its innocent pride,
And wandering garlands, and cuts deep and sure,
Unsparing for its tenderness and joy.
And in its loss and pain it wasteth not;
But yields itself with unabated life,
More perfect under the despoiling hand.
The bleeding limbs are hardened into wood;
The thinned-out bunches ripen into fruit
More full and precious, to the purple prime.

And still, the more it grows, the straitlier bound
Are all its branches; and as rounds the fruit,
And the heart's crimson comes to show in it,
And it advances to its hour,—its leaves
Begin to droop and wither in the sun;
But still the life-blood flows, and does not fail,
All into faithfulness, all into form.

Then comes the vintage, for the days are ripe.
And surely now in its perfected bloom,
It may rejoice a little in its crown,
Though it bend low beneath the weight of it,
Wrought out of the long striving of its heart.
But ah! the hands are ready to tear down
The treasures of the grapes; the feet are there
To tread them in the winepress, gathered in;
Until the blood-red rivers of the wine
Run over, and the land is full of joy.
But the vine standeth stripped and desolate,
Having given all; and now its own dark time
Is come, and no man payeth back to it
The comfort and the glory of its gift;
But rather, now most merciless, all pain

And loss are piled together, as its days
Decline, and the spring sap has ceased to flow
Now is it cut back to the very stem;
Despoiled, disfigured, left a leafless stock,
Alone through all the dark days that shall come.
And all the winter-time the wine gives joy
To those who else were dismal in the cold;
But the vine standeth out amid the frost;
And after all, hath only this grace left,
That it endures in long, lone steadfastness
The winter through:—and next year blooms again;
Not bitter for the torment undergone,
Not barren for the fulness yielded up;
As fair and fruitful towards the sacrifice,
As if no touch had ever come to it,
But the soft airs of heaven and dews of earth;—
And so fulfils itself in love once more.

And now, what more shall I say? Do I need here
To draw the lesson of this life; or say
More than these few words, following up the text:—
The Vine from every living limb bleeds wine;
Is it the poorer for that spirit shed?
The drunkard and the wanton drink thereof;
Are they the richer for that gift's excess?
Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice;
And whoso suffers most hath most to give. . . .

II.

The sculptor, with his Psyche's wings half-hewn,
May close his eyes in weariness, and wake
To meet the white cold clay of his ideal

Flushed into beating life, and singing down
The ways of Paradise. The husbandman
May leave the golden fruitage of his groves
Ungarnered, and upon the Tree of Life
Will find a richer harvest waiting him.
The soldier dying thinks upon his bride,
And knows his arms shall never clasp her more,
Until he first the face of his unborn child
Behold in heaven: for each and all of life,
And every phase of action, love, and joy,
There is fulfilment only otherwhere.—

But if, impatient, thou let slip thy cross,
Thou wilt not find it in this world again,
Nor in another; here, and here alone
Is given thee to suffer for God's sake.
In other worlds we shall more perfectly
Serve Him and love Him, praise Him, work for Him,
Grow near and nearer Him with all delight;
But then we shall not any more be called
To suffer, which is our appointment here.
Canst thou not suffer then one hour,—or two?
If He should call thee from thy cross to-day,
Saying, It is finished!—that hard cross of thine
From which thou prayest for deliverance,
Thinkest thou not some passion of regret
Would overcome thee? Thou wouldst say, "So soon!
Let me go back, and suffer yet awhile
More patiently;—I have not yet praised God."
And He might answer to thee,—"Never more.
All pain is done with." Whensoe'er it comes,
That summons that we look for, it will seem
Soon, yea too soon. Let us take heed in time

That God may now be glorified in us;
And while we suffer, let us set our souls
To suffer perfectly; since this alone,
The suffering, which is this world's special grace,
May here be perfected and left behind.

—But in obedience and humility;—
Waiting on God's hand, not forestalling it.
Seek not to snatch presumptuously the palm
By self-election; poison not thy wine
With bitter herbs if He has made it sweet;
Nor rob God's treasuries because the key
Is easy to be turned by mortal hands.
The gifts of birth, death, genius, suffering,
Are all for His hand only to bestow.
Receive thy portion, and be satisfied.
Who crowns himself a king is not the more
Royal; nor he who mars himself with stripes
The more partaker of the Cross of Christ.

But if Himself He come to thee, and stand
Beside thee, gazing down on thee with eyes
That smile, and suffer; that will smite thy heart,
With their own pity, to a passionate peace;
And reach to thee Himself the Holy Cup,
(With all its wreathen stems of passion-flowers
And quivering sparkles of the ruby stars),
Pallid and royal, saying "Drink with Me;"
Wilt thou refuse? Nay, not for Paradise!
The pale brow will compel thee, the pure hands
Will minister unto thee; thou shalt take
Of that communion through the solemn depths
Of the dark waters of thine agony,
With heart that praises Him, that yearns to Him
The closer through that hour. Hold fast His hand,

Though the nails pierce thine too! take only care
Lest one drop of the sacramental wine
Be spilled, of that which ever shall unite
Thee, soul and body to thy living Lord!

Therefore gird up thyself, and come, to stand
Unflinching under the unfaltering hand,
That waits to prove thee to the uttermost.
It were not hard to suffer by His hand,
If thou couldst see His face;—but in the dark!
That is the one last trial:—be it so.
Christ was forsaken, so must thou be too:
How couldst thou suffer but in seeming, else?
Thou wilt not see the face nor feel the hand,
Only the cruel crushing of the feet,
When through the bitter night the Lord comes down
To tread the winepress.—Not by sight, but faith,
Endure, endure,—be faithful to the end!

Is it then verily so hard to take
With willing heart, and utter faithfulness?
What better wouldst thou have when all was done?
If any now were bidden rise and come
To either, would he pause to choose between
The rose-warm kisses of a waiting bride
In a shut silken chamber,—or the thrill
Of the bared limbs, bound fast for martyrdom? . . .

1882.

HARRIET ELEANOR HAMILTON-KING.

I.

A HAUNTED HOUSE.

THE lawns are bright, the paths are wide.
The roses are bursting on every side.

All around the bowers are green,
And the shining laurels a folding-screen.

The large fruit ripens on many a tree,
Purple and gold drooping heavily.

Of health and wealth a hidden spell
Is scattered by hands invisible.

Young, and gladsome, and free they meet—
Voices of laughter and running feet.

Whether the seasons be dark or fair,
It is always summer and sunshine there.

And like a fountain that springs and falls,
There flows sweet music between the walls.

Among the guests one comes and goes
Whom no one sees and no one knows.

A neck more stately, a face more fair
Than any that meet and mingle there.

There is heaped up many a gay sea-stone,
One pearl lies among them all alone;

With a golden halo all about,
The full moon's face from the clouds looks out;

All cold on the breast of the crimson sky,
The star of the evening seems to lie.

Shining as pale, apart as far
As the pearl, or the moon, or the evening star,

That orbèd face, with its curvings rare,
Floats out from its waves of dusky hair,

With its eyes of shadow, its archèd eyes,
Whose lost looks dream upon Paradise.

One only knoweth it in the throng;
One knoweth too well, and knoweth too long.

The others are ever unaware,
Though it pass and meet them in the air,

With sighs like the sighs of the summer night,
Breathing of love and of lost delight.

That haunting vision of yearning pain,
One moment strikes and then fades again.

It rises up at the music's sound,
And sinks before they can look around.

If they catch one sight of the crownèd brow,
A sunbeam glances from bough to bough.

If a low voice thrills in the air along,
It is but the dying note of the song.

Not to sadden, only to share,
To the feast unbidden that guest comes there.

Lovely as lilies ungathered, and white
The house is filled with a dream at night.

From chamber to chamber, from door to door,
Not a sound is heard, nor step on the floor;

Through the shadowy hush as white wings win;—
Peace be to this house, and to all within!

The little children sleep soft and sweet;—
Who stands beside them with soft white feet?

The soft white hands pass over their hair;—
Sleep on, dear children, so safe and fair!

Till, where two are sleeping side by side,
Doth a dream at last between them glide.

* * * * *

Of all the angels that guard the place,
The least is not that forgotten face.

II.

A MOONLIGHT RIDE.

THROUGH the land low-lying, fast and free
I ride alone and under the moon;
An empty road that is strange to me,
Yet at every turn remembered soon:
A road like a racecourse, even and wide,
With grassy margins on either side;
In a rapture of blowing air I ride,
With a heart that is beating tune.

Light as on turf the hoof-beats fall,
As on spongy sod as fast and fleet,
For the road is smooth and moist withal,
And the water springs under the horse's feet;
And to every stride sounds a soft plash yet,
For all the length of the way is wet
With many a runnel and rivulet
That under the moonlight meet.

O surely the water lilies should be
  Sunk away and safe folded to rest!
But, no; they are shining open and free,
  White and awake on the water's breast:
On the long and shimmering waterway,
All silver-spread to the full moon's ray,
The shallow dykes that straggle and stray
  With their floating fringes drest.

The road will flow winding and winding away
  Through the sleeping country to-night;
All one long level of dusky grey,
  The border hedges slip past in flight;
Turning and twisting in many a lane,
Mile after mile of a labyrinth chain
I have seen before, I shall see again,
  Yet remember not aright.

And somewhere all out of sight there stands
  A sleeping house that is white and low,
Hid in the heart of the level lands,
  The lands where the waters wander slow,
Embowered all round by the thickset ways,
Set in a silent and stately maze
Of high-grown ilex, arbutus, bays,—
  If I ever saw it, I do not know.

Shall I ever reach it? or ere the day
Breaks, will it all have passed away?
  If only the night might last!
While the mists of moonlight the warm air fill,
Out of boskage and bower so deep and still
There reaches afar the glimmer, the thrill,—
  O the night is flying too fast!

1889.

HARRIET ELEANOR HAMILTON-KING.

I.

THE FIRST OF JUNE.

LAST night I lay upon my bed,
With sinking heart alone;
Long weeks, long months I so have lain,
Weeping and making moan.

All May has passed; I hardly know
If swift spring-rains have stirred,
There hath not broken through the dark
One flash of flower or bird.

But sleep stole on me unawares,
Even on me at last;
Though drop by drop the minutes faint
Like hours at midnight passed.

Short was the sleep, since even now
The summer dawn is nigh;
But health and healing it has brought;
I wake—but is it I?

I feel no more these limbs of pain,
I draw no sobbing breath,
Life has come back to me at last,
And God remembereth.

How many years since I have known
A waking glad like this:
Nay, can I once recall an hour
So peaceful as it is?

I have forgotten when it was
That I such ease have known;
What hinders me from rising up
And going forth alone?

Why should I, too, not wander out
Through the sweet morning mist,
And see the sunrise out of doors,
That all my life I missed?

The house is hushed and sleeping,
My footsteps noiseless fall,
From door to door, from stair to stair:
Peace rest within on all!

The door is opened easily,
I stand beneath the sky;
The old watch-dog remembers me,
Nor stirs as I go by.

Here on the lawn my children play;
Across the stile I pass,
Out of the dewy garden
Into the meadow grass.

The grass is cool and damp and tall,
It rustles to my knees:
Year after year does morning bring
Airs upon earth like these?

And to the crimson East I turn
The rising sun to meet,

The clover and the daisies dim
All close about my feet.

The cuckoo gives the signal call
From hill to hill unseen,
From every side the hymn of birds
Fills all the fields between.

Down to the brook, across the bridge;
Where deep and high and dank
The orchis heads crowd through the grass,
And leaning from the bank

The guelder-rose dips in the stream,
And golden flags are hung,
Out of whose midst the water-hen
Awakens with her young.

I have heard said, the kingfisher
Was used to haunt this brook,
But seen no more of latter years:
He comes again, for—look!—

The flashing of his wings goes by
Almost against my face:
He is not shy to-day, within
This willow fringèd place.

The sun is up, the mist is cleared,
All the still land lies fair;
As up the sloping leas I pass,
The sweetest grass grows there.

All in among the crowded lambs,
They do not run away;
The field-mice flit along the path,
Like little friends at play.

The larks sing high in the blue sky
As if in heaven they were;
I too am free and full of glee
Out in the open air.

And now I pass th' horizon hill
That bounds my window-view;
O house of love, O house of pain,
For how long time?—adieu.

* * * * *

Oh, I have wandered many a mile
Through a country wild and sweet;
I am not tired, I do not want
To stay, or sit, or eat.

It seems as if at last the soul
And body were reconciled;
I think there once was such a day
When I was a little child.

A wicket-gate leads to the wood,
And as I enter through,
The speedwell from the bank looks up
With eyes of heavenly blue.

The flowers smile up, the birds sing down,
Come in, they sing and say;
The wood is dark and fragrant-fresh
With June's first hour and day.

I wander deep, I wander far
  Into the green wood's heart;
I come unto an open space
  Where the low branches part.

Beyond the level summer lawn
  The forest oak-trees spread;
Under the stateliest of them all
  The moss has made a bed.

Oh, on soft couches laid in vain
  With aching limbs across,
How often have I dreamed of this—
  A bed of earth and moss!

There I will rest—Oh, everywhere
  Is rest and health at last;
How can such utter weariness
  So suddenly be past?

The wood-doves murmur over my head,
  Soon! soon! soon! for a sign:
But who is this beside me
  Whose eyes look into mine?

"Oh, can it be you come back at last?
  And where is it I met with you?
Are not the waste wide waters
  Of Death between us two?"

"Oh, all these years, by night and day
  I have watched beside the gate;
I have looked down the road that you would come,
  I have waited early and late;

I have been weary in Paradise,
Oh, it was long to wait!

"Do you not know that you have come
Across the waves in sleep?
And this is your birthday morning
Together we will keep."

II.

THE CROCUS.

OUT of the frozen earth below,
Out of the melting of the snow,
No flower, but a film, I push to light;
No stem, no bud,—yet I have burst
The bars of winter, I am the first,
O Sun, to greet thee out of the night!

Bare are the branches, cold is the air,
Yet it is fire at the heart I bear,
I come, a flame that is fed by none:
The summer hath blossoms for her delight,
Thick and dewy and waxen-white,
Thou seest me golden, O golden Sun!

Deep in the warm sleep underground
Life is still, and the peace profound:
Yet a beam that pierced, and a thrill that smote
Called me and drew me from far away;—
I rose, I came, to the open day
I have won, unsheltered, alone, remote.

No bee strays out to greet me at morn,
I shall die ere the butterfly is born,
  I shall hear no note of the nightingale;
The swallow will come at the break of green,
He will never know that I have been
  Before him here when the world was pale.

They will follow, the rose with thorny stem,
The hyacinth stalk,—soft airs for them;
  They shall have strength, I have but love:
They shall not be tender as I,—
Yet I fought here first, to bloom, to die,
  To shine in his face who shines above.

O glory of Heaven, O Ruler of Morn,
O Dream that shaped me, and I was born
  In thy likeness, starry, and flower of flame;—
I lie on the earth and to thee look up,
Into thy image will grow my cup,
  Till a sunbeam dissolve it into the same.

Augusta Webster.

1840—1894.

A DAUGHTER of the late Vice-Admiral George Davies, Augusta Webster was born in 1840 at Poole in Dorsetshire. Her father, who won reputation for his success in saving shipwrecked seamen, held various Coast Guard commands. For a while, during her childhood, she lived on board the *Griper* in Chichester Harbour; for six years at Banff Castle where her father was Inspecting Commander of the coast line from Banff to Peterhead; and for three years at Penzance, where he held a similar appointment. Afterwards her home was at Cambridge, her father having accepted the post of Chief Constable of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon. She married in 1863 Mr. Thomas Webster, Fellow and Law Lecturer of Trinity College, Cambridge, who later practised as a solicitor in London. Augusta Webster sat for some time as a Member of the London School Board, where her influence was considerable. Her interest in social matters is further shown by her prose volume "A Housewife's Opinions" (1879), which consisted mainly of essays originally contributed to *The Examiner*, in which she discussed with much ability many practical topics.

If Mr. Ruskin's dictum that "no weight nor mass, nor beauty of execution can outweigh one grain or

fragment of thought" were ever to be accepted as truth, Augusta Webster's position among contemporary poets would be higher than it now is, for her work seems at times so full of thought that the poetical form is clogged and overweighted. Indeed such shortcomings as have been charged against her poetry generally might all be comprised in one—a certain instinct for allowing beauty both of matter and form to succumb to strength. Perhaps the severity of her methods is partly the result of her deep study of the great classical writers of antiquity —most notably of the Greek dramatists—a study which has left abundant traces on her work. The quality which distinguishes her from all the other women poets of her time is concentrated strength. Even those who must be set above her in some other respects yield to her here. To Elizabeth Barrett Browning's gift of impulse and fire, to Christina Rossetti's gift of a deep and searching symbolism which becomes at times almost prophetic, and to Jean Ingelow's delightful power of throwing over English scenery a halo of the human feeling and sentiment appropriate to it, she has small claim. But the two last-named writers and all the other women poets of England must yield to her in that quality which, as it is generally deemed the specially masculine quality, is called virility. Because of this Augusta Webster has taken her place among Victorian poets—a place which cannot but be enduring. Though the poet's strength, for the most part, grew with her growth, increasing on the whole book by book, it was very apparent in her first immature volume "Blanche Lisle, and Other Poems" published under the pseudonym of

"Cecil Home" in 1860. "Cruel Agnes" and "St. Catherine's Tiring Maid," though somewhat imitative, are genuinely poetic in thought and treatment; the story of the lovers who "were not old in heart" reveals the germ of that aptitude in character analysis which marks her later work.

A distinct advance is apparent in "Lilian Gray" (1864). Many passages evince a maturity of thought rare in so young a poet, while not unfrequently the blank verse, though deficient in the emphasis of the author's later blank verse, excels it in music of rhythm. A novel, "Lesley's Guardians," appeared in 1864. One of the chief features of Augusta Webster's more mature poetry—her intense and passionate study of Woman's position and destiny—first became manifest in "Dramatic Studies" (1866). Of these studies the best is, perhaps, "The Snow Waste" (p. 113), which depicts allegorically the "doom of cold" borne by one who through jealousy committed deadly sin. This "Dantesque" conception is treated in a masterly manner, which appears all the more wonderful when we learn that the poem was the result of a sleepless night, when the author was only nineteen.

Although Augusta Webster's poetry, whether rhymed or unrhymed, cannot be said to show any great musical impulse, her knowledge of metrical laws, and her expertness in the use of metres, is striking. This is very observable in "The Snow Waste." It opens and concludes with a short passage in blank verse, but the body of the poem is written in eight-line stanzas. In each of these stanzas only one rhyme is employed, and the repetition of the same rhymes, which produces a

sense of gloomy monotony, is managed with extraordinary skill. There are many other noteworthy poems in this volume. "A Preacher" analyses with singular power the mental condition of a conscientious clergyman apprehensive lest having "preached to others" he himself "should be a castaway." "A Painter" exhibits, with equal force, the self-communings of a man compelled to sacrifice his higher artistic aspirations to the sordid exigences of the hour. "By the Looking Glass" displays the inner life and feelings of a girl not endowed with the gift of beauty, but who longs to be loved. "Sister Annunciata" discloses the hidden struggle of a nun who cannot altogether set aside the yearnings of earthly love, strive as she may; while in "Jeanne d'Arc" Augusta Webster is no less dramatically effective, where her subject is historical. All these "soliloquies" prove their author to possess in full measure the faculty of "thinking the thoughts of others," and therefore to be a dramatist of no mean order.

In the most remarkable volume entitled "A Woman Sold and Other Poems" (1867) the deepest movements of Woman's heart find a voice—and that often in a few pregnant and telling words that recall the methods of the great poets. Virile, however, as is the strength of the writer, her sex is constantly declaring itself by a discernment of the most secret workings of the heart of Woman such as is far beyond the reach of masculine eyes, and a passionate, almost it might be said, a biassed sympathy with the cause of Woman in her relation to Man. "Too Faithful" (p. 126) and "A Mother's Cry," with its irresistibly pathetic appeal, are charged with such sympathy. But the book is not confined to poems of this class. "Pilate"

and "Blind Bartimæus," though widely different, are both fine. "How the Brook Sings" and "The Lake" are almost Wordsworthian in their personal interpretation of nature—a quality seldom seen in Augusta Webster's work. "To One of Many" (p. 125) and "To and Fro" (p. 128) are strong poems meditative in character, and with many touches of delicate beauty.

It is in "Portraits" (1870) that the poet's strength and insight in the delineation of Woman seems to culminate. If a fault can be found in the writing of "A Castaway," one of the most original poems contained in this volume, it is that the delineation of Woman's heart in the most appalling condition of Woman's life is too painful. The theme is the same as that which Dante Rossetti handled in "Jenny," and it is extremely interesting to compare these two poems, one touching the theme from the masculine, the other from the feminine standpoint. In melody and in picturesqueness Dante Rossetti's famous poem is a masterpiece, and it is most successful in its portrayal of the ironical mood in which is unfolded Jenny's relation to her more fortunate sisters. But it is lacking in the lofty yet mournful temper that breathes from every line of "A Castaway." Were it not for the tender pity which inspires this poem as a whole some of the bitter things that fall from the lips of the lost girl would be too terrible and too daring for poetic art. Here is an instance of what I allude to:—

Well, well, I know the wise ones talk and talk:
"Here's cause, here's cure:" "No, here it is and here:"
and find society to blame, or law,
the Church, the men, the women, too few schools.

> too many schools, too much, too little taught
> somewhere or somehow someone is to blame:
> but I say all the fault's with God himself
> who puts too many women in the world.
> We ought to die off reasonably and leave
> as many as the men want, none to waste.
> Here's cause; the woman's superfluity:
> and for the cure, why, if it were the law,
> say, every year, in due percentages,
> balancing them with men as the times need,
> to kill off female infants, 'twould make room;
> and some of us would not have lost too much,
> losing life ere we know what it *can* mean.

In "Tired," excerpts from which are given (p. 131), Augusta Webster deals forcibly with the problems of "Society" so-called, and shows an insight into its hollowness which implies on her part a noteworthy freedom from conventional prejudice. "A Dilettante," extracts from which are given (p. 139), is a weighty and convincing protest against that foolish spirit of complaint when the inevitable in life is concerned with which we are all familiar. In "Portraits" Augusta Webster indulged in the eccentricity of writing blank verse without capitals at the beginning of the lines. To do this with English poetry is a great mistake; for it is not possible always to mark the distinction between metrical and immetrical writing by mere sonority and "rhetorical emphasis." Hence the usual typographical indications that the movements of the passage are meant to be metrical are not by any means superfluous. This may be said of the blank verse of most English writers, but the remark applies with particular force to the blank verse of Augusta Webster, which is much less characterised by perfection of form than by wealth of substance, and her lines require the

typographical aid which she discarded. There is great freshness in "Yu-Pe-Ya's Lute" (1874), a graceful "Chinese Tale" told in rhymed pentameter measure with interspersed songs. Of these "Too soon so fair, fair lilies" (p. 141) and "So soon asleep!" are probably the most lovely. In her prefatory note to "Yu-Pe-Ya's Lute" the author raises a suggestive literary question that space will not permit me to discuss.

Augusta Webster's genius was largely dramatic. "The Auspicious Day" (1872), her first drama, was followed in 1879 by "Disguises," a story of "sunny Aquitaine." Here she suddenly passed into a new and luxuriant style, and the play comes nearer than any other of our times to the fanciful comedy of Shakespeare and Fletcher. The scene of two impressive dramas, "In a Day" (1882) and "The Sentence" (1887), is laid at Rome in the days of the Empire. Naturally both plays bear witness to the influence of her classical studies, and, indeed, could only have been written by a scholar. They are full of power and beauty. The pathos is especially deep and searching. Her translations of "The Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus, and of "The Medea" of Euripides, published in 1866 and 1868 respectively, are exceedingly close to the originals, and display thorough acquaintance with Greek drama and a penetration into their spirit which could only be displayed by a student who was also a poet. A singularly able review of Browning's translation of the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus, appeared originally in *The Examiner*, and subsequently in her volume entitled "A Housewife's Opinions." Augusta Webster's female characters call for praise. Her Gualhardine

in "Disguises," her Klydone in "In a Day," and her Lælia in "The Sentence" are lifelike and real. Mention must also be made of the beautiful lyrics scattered throughout her dramas, notably those beginning "Hark the sky-lark in the cloud," "While the woods were green," and "Tell thee truth, sweet; no" in "Disguises."

"A Book of Rhyme" (1881) is chiefly remarkable for its importation into English poetry of these brief forms of peasant song in which Italian poetry is so rich. What Augusta Webster calls *Stornelli*, however, seem rather to be *rispetti* than *stornelli*, for a *stornello* has properly only three lines, a *rispetto* eight—the length of these poems. Though several English poets have followed her lead in adapting these forms of Italian peasant poetry to English subjects, few besides Augusta Webster have met with an unqualified success. The *rispetti* of the other writers partake of the nature of the epigram rather than of the pure *rispetto*. A sonnet, "The Brook Rhine," should be named. "Pourlain the Prisoner" (p. 142), a sonnet sequence, gives vigorously a mournful yet interesting episode of prison existence. In "A Coarse Morning" (p. 143) we have the old pathetic story of Nature inexorable to the appeal of human grief. There is real poetry in the lines "Not to Be" (p. 144). Mrs. Webster died on the 5th of September, 1894.

"Mother and Daughter," an uncompleted sonnet sequence, with an introduction by W. M. Rossetti, was published in 1895.

MACKENZIE BELL.

1866.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

THE SNOW WASTE.

I SAW one sitting mid a waste of snow
Where never sun looked down nor silvering moon,
But far around the silent skies were grey,
With chill far stars bespeckled here and there,
And a great stillness brooded over all.
And nought was there that broke the level plain,
And nothing living was there but himself.
Yet was not he alone, there stood by him
One right, one left, two forms that seemed of flesh,
But blue with the first clutchings of their deaths,
Fixed rigid in the death-pang, glassy-eyed,
Turning towards him each a vacant gaze.
And he looked on them blankly, turn by turn,
With gaze as void as theirs. He uttered speech
That was as though his voice spoke of itself
And swayed by no part of the life in him,
In an uncadenced chant on one slow chord
Dull undulating surely to and fro.
And thus it ran.

"Ye dead who comrade me amid this snow
Where through long æons I drag me to and fro,
I speak again to ye the things I know
But, knowing, cannot feel, that haply so
I may relight in me life's former glow
And thaw the ice-bound tears in me to flow,
If I might into sentient memory grow
And waken in me energy of woe.

"For there is left in me full memory
Of things that were to me in days gone by,
And I cannot read them with my inward eye;
But like a book whose fair-writ phrases lie
All shapely moulded to word-harmony
But void of meaning in their melody,
Vague echoes that awaken no reply
In my laxed mind that knows not what they cry.

"And I can reason duly with my thought,
And am not lessened of its range in aught,
Can reckon all the deeds that I have wrought
And say, 'Here lurked the canker taint that brought
The plague whereby thy whole man was distraught,
Here with a grace of good the act was fraught,
A dew of love here slaked the desert drought,
Thy sin in truth hath here the vengeance brought.'

"So can I reckoning keep of woe and weal,
And mine own self unto myself reveal
In perfect knowledge: but I cannot feel.
And all the past across my mind will steal
And leave as little trace as the swift keel
Upon the lake's cleft waves that seamless heal:
Cold memory can with the old things but deal
As with the creatures of some show unreal.

"I know that I was bent beneath the weight
Of wearing sorrow, or grew wroth with fate,
Or was with triumphing and joy elate,
Or bore towards another love or hate,
And ask, 'What were these that had power so great,
These senses in me in my former state?'
And mouth their names out in my hollow prate
To rouse with them my heart inanimate.

"Because I know if I one pang could make
Of sorrow in me, if my heart could ache
One moment for the memories I spake,
The spell that is upon me now might break,
And I might with a sudden anguish shake
The numbness from it and perceive it wake,
And these be no more bound here for my sake
But slumber calmly in their silent lake.

"Then I like other men might pass away,
And cold could no more gnaw me when I lay
Amid these snows a painless heap of clay,
And, though the sharp-tongued frosts my skin
should flay,
I should not feel, no chills on me could prey
And gnaw their teeth into my bones for aye
As now in my long doom that will not slay:
I should know no dull torture in decay.

"Ye dead who follow me, I think that ye,
If ye have any being save in me,
Must have much longing that such end should be
To my long wandering, that ye may flee
To the deep grave I gave ye and be free
From bondage here, and in death quiet be,
If ye can know and loathe the bitter lee
Ye drink from my dregged cup by That decree.

"Yet hear, if ye can hear, if ye have might,
Ye dead, to wake my heart from its strange night,
Hear now and waken it while I recite
That which hath brought on it this icy blight,
So I may come to mean my words aright
And not, as now, like some dull purblind wight
Prating by rote of shadow and of light,
Or like an idiot echoing wisdoms trite.

"What love is now I know not; but I know
I once loved much, and then there was no snow.
A woman was with me whose voice was low
With trembling sweetness in my ears, as though
Some part of her on me she did bestow
In only speaking, that made new life flow
Quick through me: yet remembering cannot throw
That spell upon me now from long ago.

"I only know it was forgetting how,
Nor can remind me why my soul should bow
Before her beauty, nor can gather now
What charm her nobleness of eye and brow
Hath with such queenship o'er me to endow;
My memory can keep count of look and vow
But nothing of their spirit re-allow.
I know, dead woman, that my love art thou.

"I look on thee and him with equal mind.
I know him too: some years my heart was twined
In love round his. He was of noble kind,
He had no rival, leaving all behind;
Me too he passed, and then my love declined.
But when I knew him first the boy would wind
His younger arms round me, and I would find
Pride in his triumphs next to mine assigned.

"He grew in strength and in all daring fast
Until, as if a sudden chill north blast
Had found me sleeping in the sun, aghast
I woke and knew my glory overcast.
No feat or skill in which I all had passed
But he passed me. My triumphs had been glassed
In eyes of all the fairest and I classed
First and alone; now I to him was last.

"In all ways last: he was more deft, more gay,
More comely, apter in the minstrel lay;
The brightness of my life had passed away:
I heard his praises echoed day by day:
And she, from whom no thought of mine could stray,
Set all her pride on him: I heard her say
Amid the maidens, 'None, seek where ye may,
Will match my brother till his hair is grey.'

"When she was wed to me I sought in vain
By hid degrees her love from him to gain;
It only seemed to move in her such pain
That need was on my hatred to refrain
From open showing of its bitter strain,
Albeit if thought could slay he had been slain,
He nothing doubting. So did all remain
Until the corn was yellow on the plain.

"And even mother earth had loved him more
Than me; his wide sun-flooded meadows bore
A golden host that numbered mine thrice o'er;
His vines a richer bloom of promise wore;
The very river turned it from my shore
That, plenty bringing, it had marged of yore,
To make his pastures richer. Wroth and sore
My heart grew in me, burning at its core.

"Before our door, beneath the palm-tree wide,
One eve I sat alone with my young bride,
For he, who mostly then was by our side,
Some days had gone beyond the lake's far tide
Where the great city basked her in her pride,
And, thinking of him, she was absent-eyed,
And ever in our dearest talk she sighed
'Great God and Light my brother's journey guide.'

"Because a pilgrim had passed by that day
And told us that the golden city lay
Beneath a ghastly plague's devouring sway,
The living could not hide their dead away,
They writhed in human heaps of foul decay,
The glutted vultures lingered o'er their prey
Along the marts, poor fools with minds astray
Howled blasphemies or leaped in ghastly play.

"And loathsome taint, he said, lurked in the air
For miles around, and whoso harboured there
Must look no more to life, unless he were
Even to miracle the Heaven's care.
So, while we watched the red lake's sunset glare,
I only joyed that he might in that snare
Be caught and die; but she could only spare
Half thoughts for me, and sighed for him some
prayer.

"I knew that there was gladness in my eyes,
But hers were clouded with sad reveries:
I spoke to her of our fair destinies,
She told her fears for him in low replies:
'Yes love him still, still me for him despise,'
I cried, 'What wife have I unless he dies?
Would that he might.' In startled sad surprise
She answered, weeping out a voice of sighs."

But a clear solemn voice rose over his,
"*Thou* speak it." And I saw a lucent form,
As if a spirit making to itself
A pure white brightness, drooping over him
Towards that shape of a dead woman, cry:
"*Thou*, speak it, if so any ghost of love

Might yearn in him towards thee." Her dead lips
Moved not, nor moaned with any breath of words,
Nor passed there any stir across her face,
But a sweet plaining voice came out from her,
A voice as of one weeping at the heart.
"Do I not love thee first and most, my own?
And art thou bitter that my heart has room
For him, my brother? Dost thou chide the sun,
Our light of life and soul, that he will shine
His brightest on him even as on thee?
Wilt thou chide love that is our second light
Because it shines upon him from my heart
Only a little less than upon thee?"
Sadly the voice died off. He, vacantly,
As though he knew her not, met her dead eyes,
Then with his old unpassioned utterance spoke.
"These were her words and thus did her voice sigh;
Mine hurried from me in a fierce reply
That burst from out my lips with sudden cry,
As though itself had willed to speak, not I,
My secret thought: I wished all love might die
If else he in her love must press me nigh:
Since he must bless my foe, the sun on high
Might dwindle into darkness utterly."

There cried a voice, "Speak thou his very words
That he may hear them spoken as he spoke,
Hear his words, laden with his hateful doom,
In thy voice that he hated: so some ghost
Of passion might awaken in his soul.
Speak *thou* the words." And I saw stand by him
A form of darkness, like a tempest-cloud,
Waving towards that shape of a dead man
That he should speak. And a voice came from that dead

As from the woman, moving not the lips
Not waking any life in the glazed eyes,
"Thus didst thou say, 'Rather might all love die
Out from the earth for ever than warm *him*!
Rather might all love perish from my life
Than have him wound into thy love with me!
And I *do* hate the sun though he be God.
What love or thanking need I to this God,
Since he but makes me one amid the all?
I curse him. Would that all his vaunted light
Were utter darkness, rather than that he
Alike with me should shine on him I hate!'"
So the voice ceased in tempest. But he looked
One moment on that corpse's livid face
With a dull dreamy loathing in his eyes,
And in the moment they were cold again
With the old quiet nothingness of gaze,
And he spoke on again in shadeless rhythm.
"These were the words wherein I did invoke
Thy doom upon me, naming every stroke
Of this long vengeance. It was his voice spoke
Thy words again. If for the moment woke
An impulse in my breast to burst its yoke
And leap out through the clogging frosts that choke
Its well-springs, it but seemed as if they broke;
Still do those frosts my stagnant life-blood cloke."

Then the dark shadow cried, "Lo I have failed,
I cannot wake him even by his hate;
He is not given me but bears such doom
As was awarded him by his own words."
And the fair brightness cried, "And I have failed
And he, alas! is left to his dread doom:"
And both passed out from him; who still spoke on.

"And while my words yet on the echoes played,
The clouds that singly through the blueness strayed,
Hurled into one a sudden darkness made;
A shrilling whirlwind all the palm-tops swayed,
Then stillness. Horror on our spirits weighed,
And I stood awe-struck, while she knelt and prayed.
Then through the dark we heard, and were afraid,
A slow voice speak the doom upon me laid."

Called then a voice that was as though it dropped
From the far stars and rose from the deep snows,
And was in all and over all at once:
"Here once again: this was the doom pronounced:
'Because thou hast cursed love which is a life
And is God's greatest gift to souls on earth,
All love shall die from thee; thou shalt not know it
Even in thought. And, since thou hast blasphemed
That which is God to thee, and cursed the day,
Thou shalt have lost all part in day. And know
That herein lies a curse more than thy mind
Can fathom yet. Yet this of hope is given,
Thou hast until to-morrow's sun be sunk
For penitence: so may this less doom be,
To live thy life alone in heart and blind
But yet to die at last as all men die.'"
He listened calmly, and again spoke on.

"One came at noon and told that he to flee
The plague had turned him homewards and would be
Once more with us before the great lake sea
Was flushed to the red evening skies. Then she,
I saw it, in her joy lost thought of me
And could forget a moment That decree.
I went, unwatched to set my passion free;
Perhaps, I thought, unwatched my weird to dree.

"I turned me home at noon. The house seemed lone,
No greeting voice made answer to my own,
But through the hush I heard a frequent moan.
I traced it where I found her anguish-prone,
Her writhing length athwart the cushions thrown,
So left to die, for all in dread had flown:
The black plague-roses on her cheek had blown,
I knew my weird's first working on her shown.

"I did not fear the plague, who inly knew
The doom that had been meted out my due
Must fence me from it though all else it slew:
I held her till the death-films came to glue
Her swollen lids apart: my cold hand drew
Them o'er her faded eye's dull gazing blue:
I still watched by her while the first plague hue
Upon the corpse's face a blackness grew.

"It was at the first evening hour she died;
And I, so waiting by my dead one's side,
Thought angrily of him who homewards hied,
And joyed that now at least the linkings tied
Between us since his sister was my bride,
Now she was dead were snapt asunder wide.
At length I heard his voice without that cried,
And I went forth and smilingly replied.

"I said, 'Go in, thy sister was distressed,
Long waiting for thee, and I bade her rest:
I think e'en now her eyes are slumber-pressed:
But thou, go clasp the sleeper to thy breast,
Let her be wakened by her looked-for guest
She said not seeing thee she slept unblest,
And named thee last half-dreaming; do her hest,
Obey the call; 'twill be a goodly jest.

"I led him to her softly: his fresh eye
Could only glimmering outline yet descry,
He saw her silent in the dimness lie,
And breathed, 'Yes she is sleeping,' then drew nigh.
And then I fled, and, that he should not fly,
I fenced the door. And then I watched the sky
That I might count how well the time went by,
And thought, 'He surely will go mad or die.'

"Two hours, then near an hour, passed onward slow,
The high east clouds were losing their last glow,
So late it grew, when I returned to know
If any evil came upon my foe.
I only heard a gasping thick and low,
I raised my torch his darkening face to show;
He lay, plague smitten, in the passing throe.
I mocked him, watching 'Is the jest but so?'

"He lay beside her, and I could not bear,
Through my great hatred, that he should rest there:
Ere yet the life had passed I sought to tear
His arms from her. But suddenly from where
The sun was sleeping, rose an awful glare
That reddened on us. When it ceased to flare
Its fiery anger I had lost all care
Of love or hatred, and I left the pair.

"But, when I was made strong with food and wine,
I called to mind that need was to consign
The darkening mass to fitter couch than mine,
And could not choose but his close grasp untwine,
That I might drag each where the mountain's spine
Broke sudden lakewards in one high rigged line.
I hurled them downwards. From the steep incline
I watched the startled ripples whirl and dwine.

"And I was calmer than the lake; no throe
Had stirred in me, no eddying of woe;
And when once more it lay unmoved below
I went in peace my tired limbs to bestow
On any freed couch, alone but pangless so,
And slept such quiet sleep as children know.
But I awakened in this waste of snow
Where evermore gnawed by quick cold I go."

He ceased, and looked long with alternate gaze
On the dead faces that were fixed on him,
And seeking in some change in them to read
His change, if any change might grow to him.
But they and he looked still one rigid void.
And nothing stirred along the boundless snows,
And nothing broke the wide unbreathing calm.
He rose, and moved with slow and even pace:
And those strange dead were borne along with him,
As though they were himself. So they passed on.
And far away along the dreadful waste
I heard the droning murmur of his words
But knew not what they bore. And when they died
In distance all things slept in one great hush,
The plain of snow and the unchanging sky.

A WOMAN SOLD; AND OTHER POEMS.

1867.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

I.—TO ONE OF MANY.

WHAT! wilt thou throw thy stone of malice now,
Thou dare to scoff at him with scorn or blame?
He is a thousand times more great than thou;
Thou, with thy narrower mind and lower aim,
Wilt thou chide him and not be checked by shame?

He hath done evil—God forbid my sight
Should falter where I gaze with loving eye,
That I should fail to know the wrong from right.
He hath done evil—let not any tie
Of birth or love draw moral sense awry.

And though my trust in him is yet full strong
I may not hold him guiltless, in the dream
That wrong forgiven is no longer wrong,
And, looking on his error, fondly deem
That he in that he erreth doth but *seem*.

I do not sooth me with a vain belief;
He hath done evil, therefore is my thought
Of him made sadness with no common grief.
But thou, what good or truth has in thee wrought
That thou shouldst hold thee more than him in aught?

He will redeem his nature, he is great
In inward purpose past thy power to scan,
And he will bear his meed of evil fate
And lift him from his fall a nobler man,
Hating his error as a great one can.

And what art thou to look on him and say
'Ah! he has fallen whom they praised, but know

My foot is sure"? Upon thy level way
Are there the perils of the hills of snow?
Yea, he has fallen, but wherefore art thou low?

Speak no light word of him, for he is more
Than thou canst know—and ever more to me,
Though he has lessened the first faith I bore,
Than thou in thy best deeds couldst ever be;
Yea, though he fall again, not low like thee.

II.—TOO FAITHFUL.

TOO fond and faithful, wilt thou vainly yet
Waste love on one who does not ask it now
And, having wronged thee, seeks but to forget?

A fairer face smiles on his love, and thou,
Thou with thy truth and fervour, stand aside,
Thou nobler-natured to her beauty bow.

There lingers in thee yet this much of pride
That he who thus has wronged himself and thee
Could never win thy truth whate'er betide,

Since in thine eyes he never more may be
So true and great that thou couldst bend to him,
Oh never more! Why is thy heart not free?

Oh wilt thou weep because his eyes are dim?
And wilt thou blush because his choice is shame
Falling on one whose love is but a whim?

An idle whim to stir a languid heart,
A business chaffering of the more and less
And rise and falling of the marriage mart.

Yet is it cause to deepen thy distress
That he shall suffer for his misplaced trust?
For did he come into thy life to bless?

He buys a bauble something touched with rust,
  Passing through many hands that did not hold,
Its lustre deadened by the market's dust.

But what to thee, if he for this has sold
  His faith, his living heart, his nobler mind,
And given gold for that which is not gold ?

Oh better that he should rest ever blind,
  Better for him—but should he wake to see
The gem, he dreamed so pure, of paltriest kind,

Too fond and faithful, what were that to thee ?
  Thou hast thy sorrow ; wherefore look beyond
To sorrow for his sorrow that shall be ?

Too fond and faithful, weak in being fond,
  False to thyself by faithfulness to him,
Since he has freed thee wherefore art thou bond ?

And if his cup hold poison to the rim,
  Dregged with life's malady beyond life's cure,
Why should its bitter drops to thine o'erbrim ?

And yet, if thou hast love so deep and pure
  That, whatsoever change the years shall bring,
Before the sight of God it may endure,

And if it seem to thee a holy thing
  That, should he need it in his day of pain,
Thou mayst have sister power of comforting,

Well, if thy love be thus, let it remain ;
  Thou wilt not fear to name it in thy prayer,
As though it were some passion wild and vain.

Well, let it be, it may make less that care
  Centered in self thou canst not wholly quell,
If others, not thine own its place shall share.

III.—TO AND FRO.

THERE is much shadow on this sunlit earth,
And sorrow lingers deep in laughing eyes,
Sad echoes tremble mid glad peals of mirth,
Low wailings whisper through rich melodies.

You cannot say of any one you know,
"I see his life, I know him very blest."
For would he tell you of the canker woe
That preys upon his being unconfessed?

You cannot think in any festive place
Of mirth and pastime and smiles flashed on all
There is no mimic weary of his face,
No actor longing for the curtain's fall.

Among the dancers cruel spectres float
And chill their victims with a dull distress,
And, sighing through the measure's clearest note,
Weird voices murmur, full of bitterness.

Old sorrows fester on in aching hearts,
New sorrows rack them with hot spasm pain;
Who knows? The ball-room actors play their parts,
And we smile with them and discern no strain.

If one should say "This is a doubtful word,
That men so sorrowing can cheat our sense"
Yet let him own when grief his soul has stirred
He has been merry with gay eloquence.

And that is best. For what would it avail
If he should say "Lo, I am very sad"
To idle hearers, though they heard his tale
And ceased a little moment to be glad?

But each heart keeps its sorrow for its own
  Nor bares its wound to the chill general gaze;
Men laugh together . . . if they weep alone:
  But sorrow walks in all the wide world's ways.

What, will you fly? her step is very fleet,
  Her freezing touch will seize you unawares.
Look on her, never grovel at her feet,
  For he is hers for ever who despairs.

Wait calmly; as she waits on that old plain,
  The stony smiler on the desert sand,
Smiling upon old pride's long-cycled wane,
  Smiling unchanged upon a saddened land.

She saw the glories of the ancient days,
  She ever sees the tombs of buried kings,
She has not lost the quiet of her gaze
  Looking a silence deep with solemn things.

The great sand-surges press upon her close,
  She in eternal calm looks out above—
And who shall look upon a waste of woes
  With such grand patience which no change may move?

Yet wait; let the great desert clouds whirl by,
  And sunlight once more floods upon the plain.
Yet wait; the foolish leaf that flies the blast
  Grows never greenly on the bough again.

Yet wait; for sorrow's self is not all sad:
  Put forth your hand and draw her veil aside;
Behold, what secret of masked smiles she had,
  What royal lovegifts in one cloked hand hide.

You will not say those were your saddest years,
  In which you sorrowed. Void is worse than pain.
And many a rich bloom grows because of tears;
  And we see Heaven's lights more when our lights wane.

Ah! who knows what is ill from what is well?
  And we, who see no more than we are shown
Of others' hearts, can we so much as tell
  If grief or joy be chiefest in our own?

For sunlight gleams upon this shadowed earth,
  Sunlight and shadow waver to and fro,
And sadness echoes in the voice of mirth,
  And music murmurs through the wail of woe.

PORTRAITS.

1870.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

I.

TIRED.

(A Selection.)

NO, not to-night, dear child; I cannot go;
I'm busy, tired; they knew I should not come;
you do not need me there. Dear, be content,
and take your pleasure; you shall tell me of it.
There, go to don your miracles of gauze,
and come and show yourself a great pink cloud.

So, she has gone with half a discontent;
but it will die before her curls are shaped,
and she'll go forth intent on being pleased,
and take her ponderous pastime like the rest—
patient delightedly, prepared to talk
in the right voice for the right length of time
on any thing that anybody names,
prepared to listen with the proper calm
to any song that anybody sings;
wedged in their chairs, all soberness and smiles,
one steady sunshine like an August day:
a band of very placid revellers,
glad to be there but gladder still to go.
She like the rest: it seems so strange to me,
my simple peasant girl, my nature's grace,
one with the others; my wood violet
stuck in a formal rose box at a show.

Well, since it makes her happier. True I thought
the artless girl, come from her cottage home
knowing no world beyond her village streets,
come stranger into our elaborate life
with such a blithe and wondering ignorance

as a young child's who sees new things all day,
would learn it my way and would turn to me
out of the solemn follies "What are these?
why must we live by drill and laugh by drill;
may we not be ourselves then, you and I?"
I thought she would have nestled here by me
"I cannot feign, and let me stay with you."
I thought she would have shed about my life
the unalloyed sweet freshness of the fields
pure from your cloying fashionable musks:
but she "will do what other ladies do"—
my sunburnt Madge I saw, with skirts pinned up,
carrying her father's dinner where he sat
to take his noon-day rest beneath the hedge,
and followed slowly for her clear loud song.

And she did then, she says, as others did
who were her like. 'Tis logical enough:
as every woman lives, (tush! as we all,
following such granted patterns for our souls
as for our hats and coats), she lived by rules
how to be as her neighbours, though I, trained
to my own different code, discerned it not
(mistaking other laws for lawlessness,
like raw and hasty travellers): and now
why should she, in a new world, all unapt
to judge its judgments, take so much on her
she did not in her old world, pick and choose
her pleasures and her tastes, her aims, her faiths,
breaking her smooth path with the thorny points
of upstart questions? She is just a bird
born in a wicker cage and brought away
into a gilded one: she does not pine
to make her nest in uncontrolled far woods,

but, unconceiving freedom, chirrups on,
content to see her prison bars so bright.

Yes, best for her; and, if not best for me,
I've my fault in it too: she's logical,
but what am I, who, having chosen her
for being all unlike the tutored type,
next try and mould her to it—chose indeed
my violet for being not a rose,
then bade it hold itself as roses do,
that passers by may note no difference?
The peasant ways must go, the homely burr,
the quaint strong English—ancient classic turns
mixed up with rustic blunders and misuse,
old grammar shot with daring grammarlessness;
the village belle's quick pertness, toss of head,
and shriek of saucy laughter—graces there,
and which a certain reckless gracefulness,
half hoydenish, half fawnlike, made in her
graces in even my eyes . . . there; the ease
of quick companionship; the unsoftened "no's;"
the ready quarrels, ready makings up;
all these must go, I would not have her mocked
among the other women who have learned
sweet level speech and quiet courtesies—
and then they jarred upon me like the noise
of music out of rule, which, heard at first,
took the fresh ear with novel melody,
but makes you restless, listened to too long,
with missing looked for rhythms. So I teach,
or let her learn, the way to speak, to look,
to walk, to sit, to dance, to sing, to laugh,
and then . . . the prized dissimilarity
was outer husk and not essential core:

my wife is just the wife my any friend
selects among my any friend's good girls,
(a duplicate except that here and there
the rendering's faulty or touched in too strong);
my little rugged bit of gold I mined,
cleared from its quartz and dross and pieced for use
with recognized alloy, is minted down
one of a million stamped and current coins

My poor dear Madge, it half seems treasonous
to let regret touch any thought of you,
loyal and loving to me as you are;
and you are very very dear to me,
I could not spare you, would not change your love
to have the rich ideal of my hope
in any other woman; as you are
I love you, being you. And for the rest,
if I, my theory's too eager fool,
mistook the freedom of blunt ignorance
for one with freedom of the instructed will,
and took yours for a nature made to keep
its hardiness in culture, gaining strength
to be itself more fully; if I looked
for some rare perfectness of natural gifts,
developing not changed, pruned and not dwarfed
if I believed you would be that to me
so many men have sung by women's names
and known no woman for, where is your fault,
who did but give yourself as you were then,
and with so true a giving? Violet,
whose is the blame if, rooted from your place,
where you grew truly to your natural law,
set by my hand in artificial soil,

bound to unwonted props, whose blame if you
are not quite violet and not quite rose?

She's happy though, I think: she does not bear
the pain of my mistake, and shall not bear;
and she'll not ever guess of a mistake.

Mistake—'tis a hard word. Well let it pass:
it shall not wrong her: for was it in her
or in myself I was mistaken most?
What, I, who have been bold to hurl revolt
at great Queen Bugaboo Society,
did I not teach her suit and service first,
wincing when she infringed some useless law?
do I not wince to-day beside the fire
at every word or gesture she shall use
not scheduled in the warrant what to do?
do I not bid her have the table thus,
assort such viands, use such furniture,
wear such a stuff at morning, such at night,
all to the warrant of Queen Bugaboo,
and feel a something missing when she fails,
a discord setting all my teeth on edge?
Why, what a score of small observances,
mere fashionable tricks, are to my life
the butter on the bread, without which salve
the bit's too coarse to swallow; what a score
of other small observances and tricks,
worn out of fashion or not yet come in,
reek worse than garlic to my pampered taste,
making the wholesomest food too difficult!
And that which in an ancient yesterday
was but some great man's humour is to me
duty by rote to-day. I had not felt

my own life that punctilious copy-book,
writ to stock patterns set to all a school,
I have called usual lives, but my poor Madge
has unawares informed me of myself.

* * * * *

Oh, I am tired!
tired, tired, of this bland smiling slavery,
monotonous waste of life. And, while we fools
are making curtsies and brave compliments
to our rare century, and, courtierly,
swaddling our strength in trammels of soft silk,
the rotten depths grow rottener. Every day
more crime, more pain, more horror. We are good
no doubt, we "better classes"—oh, we boast
our modern virtues in the dead men's teeth
that were our fathers—we are earnest now,
and charitable, and we wash ourselves,
and have a very fair morality;
most well brought up, in fine, of any men
that any age has nurtured, and besides
so equal in our manners and our coats:
and then the classes which, though bettering,
are not quite *better* yet, are the most shrewd,
most apt, most honest, most intelligent,
that ever the world saw yet. True all of it
for aught I know, some of it as I think,
but underneath—great God, how many souls
are born an hour as provender for hell!

* * * * *

Tired, tired—grown sick of battle and defeat,
lying in harbour, like a man worn out
by storms, and yet not patient of my rest:

how if I went to some kind southern clime
where, as they say, lost in long summer dreams,
the mind grows careless with sun-drunkenness
and sleeps and wakens softly like a child?
Would Madge be over sorry to come out
into free loneliness with me a while?
clear tints and sunshine, glowing seas and skies,
beauty of mountains and of girdled plains,
the strangeness of new peoples, change and rest,
would these atone to her for so much lost
which she counts precious? For she loves that round
of treadmill ceremonies, mimic tasks,
we make our women's lives—Good heavens what work
to set the creatures to, whom we declare
God purposed for companions to us men . . .
companions to each other only now,
their business but to waste each other's time.
So much to do among us, and we spend
so many human souls on only this!
in petty actress parts in the long game
(grave foolery like children playing school,
setting themselves hard tasks and punishments,)
that lasts till death and is Society:
the sunlight working hours all chopped and chipped
in stray ten minutes by some score of friends
who, grieved their friend's not out, come rustling in
by ones and twos to say the weather's fine;
or paid away, poor soul, on pilgrimage
reciprocally due to tell them so:
each woman owing tax of half her life
as plaything for the others' careless hours,
each woman setting down her foot to hold
her sister tightly to the tethered round,
will she or nill she: all with rights on each

greater than hers . . . and I might say than God's,
since He made work the natural food of minds,
cheated of which they dwindle and go dead
like palsied limbs, and gives to each that sense
of beasts, who know their food, to know its work,
choosing the great or little.

But myself,
have I befooled the instinct by warped use?
for is not the fruit rotten I have found
in all my labours; nothing to the world
and to me bitterness? And I forget
the strong joy of endeavour, and the fire
of hope is burned out in me; all grows dull
rest is not rest and I am sick of toil:
I count the cost, and—

Ready, love, at last?
Why, what a rosy June! A flush of bloom
sparkling with crystal dews—Ah silly one,
you love these muslin roses better far
than those that wear the natural dew of heaven.
I thought you prettier when, the other day,
the children crowned you with the meadow-sweets:
I like to hear you teach them wild flowers' names
and make them love them; but yourself—

What's that?
"The wild flowers in a room's hot stifling glare
would die in half a minute." True enough:
your muslin roses are the wiser wear.
Well, I must see you start. Draw your hood close:
and are you shawled against this east wind's chills?

II.

A DILETTANTE.

(A Selection.)

Selfish, you call me? callous? Hear a tale.
There was a little shallow brook that ran
between low banks, scarcely a child's leap wide,
feeding a foot or two of bordering grass
and, here and there, some tufts of waterflowers
and cresses, and tall sedge, rushes and reeds;
and, where it bubbled past a poor man's cot,
he and his household came and drank of it,
and all the children loved it for its flowers
and counted it a playmate made for them:
but, not far off, a sandy arid waste
where, when a winged seed rested, or a bird
would drop a grain in passing, and it grew,
it presently must droop and die athirst,
spread its scorched silent leagues to the fierce sun;
and once a learned man came by and saw,
and "lo," said he, "what space for corn to grow,
could we send vivifying moistures here,
while look, this wanton misdirected brook
watering its useless weeds!" so had it turned,
and made a channel for it through the waste:
but its small waters could not feed that drought,
and, in the wide unshadowed plain, it lagged,
and shrank away, sucked upwards of the sun
and downwards of the sands; so the new bed
lay dry, and dry the old; and the parched reeds
grew brown and dwined, the stunted rushes drooped,
the cresses could not root in that slacked soil,
the blossoms and the sedges died away,

the greenness shrivelled from the dusty banks,
the children missed their playmate and the flowers,
and thirsted in hot noon-tides for the draught
grown over precious now their mother went
a half-mile to the well to fill her pails;
and not two ears of corn the more were green.

Tell me, what should I do? I take my life
as I have found it, and the work it brings;
well, and the life is kind, the work is light,
shall I go fret and scorn myself for that?
and must I sally forth to hack and hew
at giants or at windmills, leave the post
I could have filled, the work I could have wrought,
for some magnificent mad enterprise,
some task to lift a mountain, drain a sea,
tread down a Titan, build a pyramid?
No, let me, like a bird bred in the cage,
that, singing its own self to gladness there,
makes some who hear it gladder, take what part
I have been born to, and make joy of it.

* * * * *

Oh chiding friend, I am not of your kind,
you strenuous souls who cannot think you live
unless you feel your limbs, though 'twere by aches:
great boisterous winds you are, who must rush on
and sweep all on your way or drop and die,
but I am only a small fluttering breeze
to coax the roses open: let me be;
perhaps I have my use no less than you.

FROM YU-PE-YA'S LUTE.

1874.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

"TOO soon so fair, fair lilies;
To bloom is then to wane;
The folded bud has still
Tomorrow at its will;
Blown flowers can never blow again.

Too soon so bright, bright noontide;
The sun that now is high
Will henceforth only sink
Towards the western brink;
Day that's at prime begins to die.

Too soon so rich, ripe summer,
For autumn tracks thee fast;
Lo, death-marks on the leaf!
Sweet summer, and my grief;
For summer come is summer past.

Too soon, too soon, lost summer;
Some hours and thou art o'er.
Ah! death is part of birth:
Summer leaves not the earth,
But last year's summer lives no more."

1881.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

I.—POURLAIN THE PRISONER.

I.

BEYOND his silent vault green springs went by,
The river flashed along its open way,
Blithe swallows flitted in their billowy play,
And the sweet lark went quivering up the sky.
With him was stillness and his heart's dumb cry
And darkness of the tomb through hopeless day,
Save that along the wall one single ray
Shifted, through jealous loop-holes, westerly.

One single ray: and where its light could fall
His rusty nail carved saints and angels there,
And warriors, and slim girls with braided hair,
And blossomy boughs, and birds athwart the air.
Rude work, but yet a world. And light for all
Was one slant ray upon a prison wall.

II.

One ray, and in its track he lived and wrought,
And in free wideness of the world, I know,
One said, "Fair sunshine, yet it serves not so,
It needs a tenderer when I shape my thought;"
And, "'Tis too brown and molten in the drought,"
And, "'Tis too wan a greyness in this snow,"
And would have toiled, but wearied and was woe,
While days stole past and had bequeathed him nought.

Maybe in Gisors, round the fortress mead—
Gisors where now, when fair-time brings its press,
They seek the prisoner's tower to gaze and guess

And love the work he made in loneliness—
One cursed the gloom, and died without a deed,
The while he carved where his one ray could lead.

III.

"Oh loneliness! oh darkness!" so we wail,
Crying to life to give we know not what,
The hope not come, the ecstasy forgot,
The things we should have had and, needing, fail,
Nor know what thing it was for which we ail,
And, like tired travellers to an unknown spot,
Pass listless, noting only "Yet 'tis not,"
And count the ended day an empty tale.

Ah me! to linger on in dim repose
And feel the numbness over hand and thought,
And feel the silence in the heart, that grows.
Ah me! to have forgot the hope we sought.
One ray of light, and a soul lived and wrought,
And on the prison walls a message rose.

II.—A COARSE MORNING.

OH the yellow boisterous sea,
The surging, chafing, murderous sea!
And the wind-gusts hurtle the torn clouds by,
On to the south through a shuddering sky,
And the bare black ships scud aloof from the land.
'Tis as like the day as can be,
When the ship came in sight that came never to strand,
The ship that was blown on the sunken sand—
And he coming back to me!

Oh the great white snake of foam,
The coiling, writhing, snake of white foam,
Hissing and huddering out in the bay,
Over the banks where the wrecked ship lay,

Over the sands where the dead may lie deep!
There are some in the churchyard loam,
Some two or three the sea flung to our keep:
Their mothers can sit by a grave to weep,
But *my* son never came home.

Never, never, living or dead—
Oh, never, Willie, living or dead,
Could you keep your word and come back to me!
Oh, my darling! As like this day as can be,
When the ship came in sight that came never to strand,
When the ship came rounding the head,
Close to the haven and close to the sand.—
And their graves are long green that were tossed to land,
Ah, "Sure to come back," he said!

III.—NOT TO BE.

THE rose said "Let but this long rain be past,
And I shall feel my sweetness in the sun
And pour its fulness into life at last."
But when the rain was done,
But when dawn sparkled through unclouded air,
She was not there.

The lark said "Let but winter be away,
And blossoms come, and light, and I will soar,
And lose the earth, and be the voice of day."
But when the snows were o'er,
But when spring broke in blueness overhead,
The lark was dead.

And myriad roses made the garden glow,
And skylarks carolled all the summer long—
What lack of birds to sing and flowers to blow?
Yet, ah, lost scent, lost song!
Poor empty rose, poor lark that never trilled!
Dead unfulfilled!

IV.—ENGLISH STORNELLI.

MARJORY

SUMMER.

The Flowing Tide.

THE slow green wave comes curling from the bay
And leaps in spray along the sunny marge,
And steals a little more and more away,
And drowns the dulse, and lifts the stranded barge.
Leave me, strong tide, my smooth and yellow shore;
But the clear waters deepen more and more:
Leave me my pathway of the sands, strong tide;
Yet are the waves more fair than all they hide.

The Heart that lacks Room.

I love him, and I love him, and I love:
Oh heart, my love goes welling o'er the brim.
He makes my light more than the sun above,
And what am I save what I am to him?
All will, all hope I have, to him belong;
Oh heart, thou art too small for love so strong:
Oh heart, grow large, grow deeper for his sake;
Oh love him better, heart, or thou wilt break!

The Lovers.

And we are lovers, lovers he and I:
Oh sweet dear name that angels envy us;
Lovers for now, lovers for by and by,
And God to hear us call each other thus.
Flow softly, river of our life, and fair;
We float together to the otherwhere:
Storm, river of our life, if storm must be,
We brunt thy tide together to that sea.

AUTUMN.

We Two.

The road slopes on that leads us to the last,
And we two tread it softly, side by side;
'Tis a blithe count the milestones we have passed,
Step fitting step, and each of us for guide.
My love, and I thy love, our road is fair,
And fairest most because the other's there:
Our road is fair, adown the harvest hill,
But fairest that we two are we two still.

We Two.

We two, we two! the children's smiles are dear—
Thank God how dear the bonny children's smiles!—
But 'tis we two among our own ones here,
We two along life's way through all the whiles.
To think if we had passed each other by;
And he not he apart, and I not I!
And oh to think if we had never known;
And I not I and he not he alone!

WINTER.

The Daughter.

Go forth, my darling, in the wreath and veil;
My hand shall place them for thee; so goodbye.
Thou hast Love's rose, and tend it without fail;
It withers, dear, if lovers let it lie.
Go, my own singing bird, and be his now;
And I am more than half as glad as thou.
Ah me! the singing birds that were our own
Fly forth and mate: and 'tis long life alone.

Isabella Harwood.

(*"Ross Neil."*)

1840—1888.

Isabella Harwood, who is better known by the name of Ross Neil, occupies a place among the writers of her own day corresponding to that filled by Joanna Baillie in a preceding generation. Like Joanna Baillie she kept the torch of the poetical drama alight without the power to send it abroad. Her plays pleased in the closet, but could take no hold upon the stage. In an era of great dramatic activity, the authoress of "Inez" and "Elfinella" might have passed unobserved: in her own day she stood forth as the writer whose experiments in poetical drama were the most numerous, the most earnest, and, in many respects, the most successful. The two examples selected will convey a fair idea of her intellectual ability, singular elegance of diction, and accurate delineation of character. She has done all that depended upon herself; the misfortune is that after having collected all the materials of the pyre with diligence and arranged them with judgment, she still needs the Promethean spark to kindle them. Her dramas are too manifestly works of reflection; she is never carried away by her subject, while at the same time too much interested in it to sink to the level of a mere playwright. Before essaying the drama, she had produced some deservedly successful novels, and acquired the art

of constructing a plot. She was the daughter of Philip Harwood, editor of the *Saturday Review*. Her life was entirely uneventful; but her good sense, amiability, and accomplishments adorned a tasteful home, and charmed a congenial circle. She wrote no fewer than fourteen plays, every one of which may be read with pleasure.

RICHARD GARNETT.

LORD AND LADY RUSSELL.

1876.

ISABELLA HARWOOD.

KING CHARLES THE SECOND AND THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR.

(From Act I, Scene I.)

De Barillon. Sir, 'tis my charge to tell you from my king
How much his very heart is grieved to see
The unworthy dealings of this parliament,
On whose obedient loyal thankfulness
Your princely nature counted.

King. Then his grief
May keep mine company, for I grieve too,
But grieving ne'er was cure for any ill.

De Bar. He would grieve more were there no cure for this,
Since in his judgment those who seek to hurt
Your royal brother's birthright make themselves
The foes not only of your majesty,
But of all kings, and of the holy church,
Whose eldest son he is; so doth he deem
Himself near touched by their rebelliousness.

King. And I am touched yet nearer, being touched
In mine own brother, for, believe me, sir,
My brother's rights are held by me as dear
As by the king of France, and you have seen
How for his service I have put away
Two parliaments already. But it seems
All I can do boots not.

De Bar. No, not unless
The third be sent to seek the other twain.
King. If 'tis the counsel of the king of France
That I should reign and fill my coffers full
And never ask a parliament to help,
'Tis for the king of France to show me how.
De Bar. So will he, sir, and doth—as you shall see
Will you but scan this paper. [*Giving a paper.*
King. Ay? Hum, hum—
Two million livres; the second year and third
Five hundred thousand crowns. I see indeed
He knows the way, but goes not far enough;
Let him but follow further this same road,
And it will lead him right.
De Bar. Sir, he hath gone
So far that more he cannot.
King. Hath he thought
What 'tis that he would have me do? to break
A parliament that hath not lived a week,
A parliament that if 'tis broken now
Must be my last, for, plain enough to see,
I could not look another in the face.
So that indeed he bids me shut the door
For ever on my people, and for ever
Give up all hope of hearing that sweet mus'c
Our blended loves should make. Nay, if I smile
It is because you teach me.
De Bar. And I smiled
Thinking that some good deeds reward themselves.
King. But parliaments can deal reward enough
Unto good deeds that please them—as perchance
A war with France, how say you? So, come now,
I will be plain as though I thought aloud——
Why is your king so niggard? If he will,

Now is the time that England may be brought
Within his vassalage for evermore;
And will he let so fair a chance slip by
Because he grudges something of the price?
De Bar. He fears no slipping by, because he thinks
He hath bid the highest price.
King. The highest price!
Then, by my life, the bargain will not hold.
De Bar. Your majesty is harder with my king
Than he with you.
King. So are you pleased to say.
De Bar. So is it, sire. If he were half so hard,
Would he not stand, as 'tis his right to stand,
On the fulfilment of that private treaty——
King. There, there, 'twill do.
De Bar. I say that private treaty
Whereby the king of England bound himself
To make avowal of his secret faith
In sight of all the world——
King. For Heaven's love
Be not so loud.
De Bar. And cast away for ever
The name of Protestant. Nay, sir, fear not;
They shall not hear; I know how perilous
Unto your honour, and your power, and you,
The lightest breath might be that waked a scent
For jealousy to follow.
King. Why indeed
Such breath might peradventure puff me forth
Again upon my travels—and of travels
I am quite weary, besides that then no more
My brother France could fit me to his use.
De Bar. Full well he knows, nor ever with a thought
Hath blamed you that you have not put in act

A bond wherein your wish outran your power;
You could not if you would; his eyes and mine
Bear for you daily witness, having seen
How you have found it needful to deny
Unto your people that such bond e'er was,
And how the disbelief of some of them
Hath wrought well-nigh your ruin. Never doubt;
Upon this secret of your majesty's
We keep as careful watch as 'twere our own,
Knowing how precious 'tis, not trusted e'en
To your most trusted friends.

King. So precious 'tis
That now you mean to make it count with me
For full a million crowns—ay is't not so?

De Bar. Sir, what I said I have but said to show
Our friendship hath deserved that yours should come
A little way to meet it.

King. And in truth
You have reasoned closely, leaving ne'er a mesh
For me to 'scape by. I am caught and caged;
And even therefore shall the bargain stand
As you would have it stand; my brother France
Shall keep the promise he hath made me here,
And I forthwith will break this parliament,
The last of all its race.

De Bar. 'Tis well resolved,
And all your friends must give your majesty
Joy of so wise a purpose.

THE HEIR OF LINNE.

1879.

ISABELLA HARWOOD.

(From Act II., Scene I.)

Enter Lionel, John of the Scales *following.*

Lion. Break off—let silence be. Your pardon, friends;
But I have that to say which till 'tis said
Burns in my throat.
Lady F. Alas! my lord, what is't?
Lion. And yet as hard to tell as keep untold—
You being all my friends, to whom my griefs
Are even as your own.
Lady F. O but yet tell.
Hub. We'll strive our best to bear.
Sir Ruf. We will be strong.
Lion. Know then, a beggar stands before you here—
A landless, houseless beggar.
Lady F. What means this?
O now I see—a jest.
Lord F. Faith, a good jest.
Sir Ruf. Or would be good if 'twere not beggarly.
Hub. When next you try the appetite of belief,
Offer a smaller mouthful.
Lion. Have you ne'er
Heard a voice speak from a sad heart before,
That now you know it not? I say again
I am a beggar, out of land and goods
Tricked by yon villain, who of all you see
Is master and disposer.
John. 'Tis quite true,
Dear lords and ladies, though so strange it seems—

True, I mean I am master; which, I take it,
Is the point of chief concern.
Lion. Ay, true, all true.
He hath spent, and let me spend, till from my store
The last round coin hath rolled (surely made round
To roll the easier); and more than this,
Hath tied my hands so to my sides with debt
I cannot reach them forth for timely aid,
And must stand by and see a bond enforced
That gives to him the house and lands of Linne.
John. Yes, if before this hour to-morrow night
Those five-and-twenty thousand crowns you owe
Be not paid back in full—my little all.
Lion. Thus stands it, friends. You see, a desp'rate case.

[*A pause, during which the Guests look at each other, and whisper.*

[*Aside*] Poor girl, poor love; I dare not lift my eyes
To where she is, as one who stabs himself,
Yet turns away from looking on the wound.
[*To* AMABEL, *who stands near him.*] Tell me, how fares the Lady Geraldine?
Amab. I will go and comfort her. O my sweet friend!
Lett. Need I say how I pity?
Geral You need not——
Nor pity one who pities not herself.
Lion. [*aside*]. I knew not how she loved me, or how true
She spake, saying that gold to her was dross.
Come, for her sake I will be strong as she.
[*Aloud*] Your silence, friends, well shows you think the time
Too short for help to reach me.
Lord F. Why indeed

I see not how, in four-and-twenty hours—
To be quite plain with you, as sure I am
You wish us to be plain, I cannot think
You have been wholly prudent.

Hub. Rankest folly
To put such trust in others! 'Tis so easy
To keep account oneself of what one owes.

Sir Ruf. Had you been earlier open with your friends!
There would have then been time for us to give
Advice that might have saved.

Lion. But now, I see,
'Tis all too late for friendship's self to help—
And trust me, though time served you to redeem
My lands, as well I know you fain would do,
I ne'er had suffered you to have your will
At any peril of your own grave loss.
The folly hath been mine, and mine must be
The paying of the forfeit.

Lord F. On my word,
A noble spirit.

Sir Ruf. From my lord of Linne
I looked for nothing less, yet must admire.

Lion. And now that of my state you know the worst,
You next shall learn my hopes, the arms wherewith
I look to vanquish Fortune; for be sure
While I have friends—or others peradventure,
Called by a dearer name—who still will deign
To wish me well, I'll wrestle for their sake
Till I have slain my troubles or they me,
Yea, strive to tame disaster for my slave
To help me to new wealth, which I'll go forth
Into the world to conquer with the sword
Of love and hope.

Lord F. An excellent resolve!
Sir Ruf. Wherein all our best wishes shall be yours.
Lion. Thanks. If those wishes have borne fruit or not
Before three years are over shall you know;
For three years being ended, with no sight
Or news of me, conclude me either dead
Or of my hopes fall'n short, and look no more
To see me in your midst. And thou, who once
Wert to have been the sunshine of my home,
Think thyself free, when those three years are done,
To make bright with thy smiles another's hearth;
Longer I would not have thy fair young life
Wasted with bootless waiting.
Lady F. But, my lord,
Since to my daughter still you seem to ascribe
Part in your fortunes, you will pardon me
If I should ask you what the surety is
For their so speedy mending.
Lion. Chiefly, madam,
Strong heart and hands, by love made stronger.
Lady F. Ah!
Lion. The gold I hope one day to dower her with
Is now stored up in that new fairer world
Mariners tell us of beyond the west,
The treasure-house of earth, rich with a glow
Of million sunsets—there will I go seek
My second fortune, or, it may be, chance
To find it on the seas, where Spanish galleons
Crowd sail at sight of the smallest English bark.
Lady F. A little scattered, sir, it seems to lie.
Lion. Not long ago I held discourse with one
Who in those lands and waters of the west
Had made himself from poor in brief space rich,

And who so took my ear his prisoner
With things he told me—of balm-breathing groves
Where birds like jewels sparkle in and out,
And many-coloured skies that blend and change
With the blushing hills their blushes—then again
Of the crash of oak 'gainst oak, and steel 'gainst steel
And the sacred cry of Spaniards to their saints,
And, following soon, the full-voiced English cheer
Telling of victory, and good gold won
From use of foreign foes—with things like these
He so ensnared my fancy that well-nigh
He made me wish my fortune still to seek.

Sir Ruf. [*Aside.*] A modest wish, soon granted.

Lion. He I speak of—
A wealthy burgher now—a few years since
Had only in the world his own stout heart,
And a poor patrimony of no more
Than some two thousand crowns, but these enough
To equip and man the bark that made him heir
Of far-off Indian kings and Spanish dons.
Now I, you see, am strong, and of a spirit,
I trust, to dare as much as any dare;
So with two thousand crowns I hope to make
My fortunes equal his. These still I lack,
But shall not long, I know, when once I say
That of my friends I will not shame to ask
A petty loan that will not do them hurt.
Which of you all will lend two thousand crowns?
Or give; since it may be that death, belched up
By angry seas, or slung by foeman's hand,
Will make my bond a mock. Which of you? speak.
[*A pause.*

I see you think it is for me to choose
Whom I will have for helper, and in truth

Where I know all to be so much my friends,
By making choice of one I need not fear
To give the rest offence. Hubert Fitzwater,
To you in this great need I bring my suit,
Both since you are my brother, and because
I did you lately a good turn, which now
I should be churlish if I gave you not
Occasion to requite.

Hub. What! taunt me, sir,
With favours past? I have just now at hand
No more than what for present use I need;
But let me say, if aught could make me fling
Your favors back into your teeth, 'twere this.

Lion. I do confess that when I asked of you
Most gravely I mistook; yet pray believe,
To taunt you I meant not. Sir Rufus Rollestone,
In the shrill-voiced hunting-field, and at the board
Where wine makes warm, you long have been my friend,
Nor now that sport and feast for me are done
Will be aught other. Those two thousand crowns
Whereon I build my hopes I ask of you,
Nor shame to ask.

Sir Ruf. Of me! Upon my life,
More sorry am I than I well can say,
But I have paid away of late such sums—
That new estate I bought—and then some wine
I've just laid down—and, to confess the truth,
I scarce can see my way——

Lion. Yet in your place
Methinks I could have found one. Nay, not now——
Although you offered now, I would not take.

Sir Ruf. I offer not; would only that I could
In justice to myself.

Lion. Will none else speak?
Not one among them all? O now I find
What I knew not before—a poor man's friends
In justice to themselves must all be poor.
Why then, my Lord Fitzwater, unto you,
Whom I thought not to trouble, must I turn,
You who perchance less easily can spare
Than some of those, who will not.
Lord F. And who said
I could not spare? you take upon yourself
To speak strange things. It doth indeed fall out
That at this moment—most unhappily—
At this especial moment——
Lady F. At this moment
He hath to think of the welfare of his child.
So can do nought to help the hopes of one
Whose suit he favours not, and doth forbid.
Is it not so, my lord?
Lord F. 'Twas even thus
I was about to say.
Lion. You would deny me
All chance of winning her?
Lady F. Most absolutely,
As a suitor quite unfit.
Lord F. O quite unfit.
Lion. But your denial, sir, and, madam, yours,
I will not take; 'tis she, and only she,
Whose sentence I will stand by. Geraldine,
Betrothed, belovèd, speak; will you not wait
A poor three years, to see if for your sake
I cannot force from Fortune's hand as much
As will, with my great love, make up a tribute
That, at your feet laid, your love will not scorn?
Answer, and for the battle give me strength.

Geral. My parents have for me made answer, sir,
Whereby, as is my duty, I abide.

Lion. Because it is your duty, not your will ?
Nay, then, if still you love me, I have right
To claim you still for mine, my bride, my queen,
Whom in the citadel of my love I'll hold
'Gainst all the opposing world. That duty's none
Which bids you break your heart.

Geral. O but I hope
My heart is framed less weakly than you deem,
And since you thus constrain me to speak plain,
I tell you, sir, I can as easily
Put from my heart one that in false disguise
Hath sought to enter there, as from my person
This token of my all too simple trust
And his deceit.

[*Disengages a ring from her chain, and throws it down.* LIONEL *mechanically does the same, then looks round, as one bewildered.*

Lion. They have the faces still
Of men and women.

Emily Pfeiffer.

1841—1890.

Emily Pfeiffer, who died on the 2nd of June, 1890, was a poet of remarkable originality and sweetness. She had had many difficulties to contend with, not the least of which were lack of systematic education in youth, and disease which early laid hold of a constitution, from the first weak, and almost morbidly sensitive. She was born in 1841. Her father, Mr. R. Davis, had been at one time possessed of considerable property in Oxfordshire, and was an officer in the army. Her mother was the youngest child of a once numerous family, by far the greater number of whom had died prior to her birth (two of the sons of wounds received in battle and one by accident). Her maternal grandfather, Mr. Tilsley, of Milford Hall, in Montgomeryshire, had unfortunately given the weight of his name to a county bank of which his only remaining son was the head; and when this bank failed, he held himself in honour, though not in law, answerable for its liabilities to the whole extent of his fortune. Comparative poverty was thus the fate of his family; for even the husbands of his daughters had become involved in the bank's failure.

Her father's position as a large-hearted country squire became very painful to him from his inability to do for those about him what he would. His little daughter Emily, at a very early age, began to realise

what the struggles and pinchings incident to small means meant; and the circumstances in which she was placed opened the door to an invading flood of sensibility unfitted to her childish years. The wearisome and hopeless monotony of the lives lived in the peasant homes which she frequently visited, pressed upon her with an unspeakable weight, and she became subject to fits of depression and melancholy, which she tried to hide from others. She has very clearly indicated the feeling of this period in her poem entitled "A Lost Eden."

Of regular education for the growing minds of the children there was none; but Mrs. Pfeiffer thought that the struggle kept up then and always by her parents to maintain a position was fruitful in better consequences than mere schooling would have been without it. Only in her own case, as would inevitably happen with a child like her, too much time and scope were allowed for brooding over the woes of others and the evils of life in many forms. As she grew older, she endeavoured to find relief and escape from her own thoughts in books. She read whatever came in her way, and dated her awakening to the sense of wonder and beauty in nature from a first sight of the sea, and to the significance of human life and language by the reading of a work on the Round Towers of Ireland. It is indeed marvellous what the young mind will find sustenance in.

By and by—and a happy circumstance it no doubt was—she was taken by a friend who felt a warm interest in her on a tour abroad. She saw the Rhine, with its ancient castles, its lovely scenery, and historic old towns, and found in that journey a turning point in her life. Afterwards she spent a season

in London, and drew from its gaiety, variety, and life the delight, aid and suggestion such a mind was likely to feel. Not long after that she married Mr. Pfeiffer, a rich German merchant in London. In this new existence she found leisure and abundant stimulus to write, and wrote a great deal; but the lack of systematic education was keenly realised, and she now felt more than before that there was much to master as well as much to unlearn. She drew out a plan of more methodical study and work; but this was frustrated through such utter and long-continued physical prostration that for some years she was unable even to write her own letters.

In spite of all the drawbacks progress was made, and in 1873 "Gerard's Monument," which had been written in the utmost secrecy, was published, and with it her literary career may be said to have begun. From that time, at intervals, volumes of poetry appeared, and articles on "Woman's Work" and related themes in the *Contemporary Review* and elsewhere; all having the same merits, marked by thought, earnestness, and felicity of expression. Perhaps her highest mark in technical quality in poetic work is reached in her volume—a selection from a much larger mass—entitled "Songs and Sonnets."

In spite of the ill-health from which Mrs. Pfeiffer suffered, her married life was one of delightful harmony and happiness. Her husband believed in her powers, and was wise in his suggestions and encouragements. But she still exercised her art under peculiar difficulty, living always on the brink of insomnia, which was only kept at bay by change of occupation, the most fascinating and effectual being

painting, especially the painting of flowers. Mr. Pfeiffer predeceased his wife by exactly a year.

Mrs. Pfeiffer told the present writer that she regarded it as a duty to the memory of her husband to do all that in her lay to cultivate still further the literary gift in which he so firmly believed; and she at that time cherished the hope that, in part, it might be given her to do so. But this, she added, was not the only work that had been left to her to carry out for his sake. He was a firm believer in the influence for good that women were destined to exercise on the future of society; and after the satisfaction of all legitimate claims, the fortune made by him in this country was to go, by his wish, to an object calculated to develop and to train, in chosen individuals, this factor of human progress. The small orphanage designed to experiment on these lines was already built, and she hoped soon to open it, when death overtook her. The orphanage has since been opened, and others are to follow, managed by a body of trustees. Mrs. Pfeiffer also took a warm interest in the drama, and practically expressed this by offering a large sum to found a School of Dramatic Art.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

LYRICS.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

I.—LOVE CAME KNOCKING AT MY DOOR.

LOVE came knocking at my door in the flowery month of May,
'Twas the morning of the year, and the morning of the day;
He was a winsome boy,
And I a maiden coy,
But I followed him, I followed! for he drew me with the wile
Of his eyes, his words, and whispers, and the glamour of his smile.

Oh the merry laughing moments, oh the soft, the shining hours,
When I followed as he led me through his gardens and his bowers!
Love was a thing divine,
I was his, and he was mine;
So I followed him, I followed, could have followed till I died,
In the wake of his young glory, and the fulness of my pride.

Now the merry days are over, with the joy and pride and show;
Love has grown to his full stature; I am weary as I go.
Shamed is the golden head,
And the magic smile is fled

For the dust and soil of earth
Mock the greatness of Love's birth;
But I follow, and if weeping I, though weeping, follow still,
With no magic and no glamour, but a faithful human will.

Ay, I follow still, I follow, though no longer through the May,
Though the lingering dreams of morning with the morn have passed away.
Now Love is no more glad,
Nay, his very smile is sad;
But he needs me even more
Than I needed him before;
So I follow, still I follow, and through all the darker seeming,
Love's true need of me is sweeter than his smile that held me dreaming.

And when one day hand in hand we before God's gate shall stand,
And the gate shall open wide that we enter side by side,
We may gaze in glad surprise
Into one another's eyes,
Not to find a winsome boy,
Or a maiden vain and coy;
But two creatures shining bright
In the pure and keen love-light,
Of the patience and the faith
That have conquered more than death.
Then I follow love no longer, but I sink upon thy breast
To abide there hushed for ever in the joy of utter rest.

II.—THE CROWN OF LOVE.

I WOULD be a goddess in
The light of those dear eyes
Apt to hold you as to win,
All-beautiful, all-wise.
Pray you wherefore should you deem
This a vain and idle dream?
Purblind love that cannot see
That woman still to man may be
Whatever she can seem!

I would win your tender trust,
But not to keep you still
Kneeling lowly in the dust,
Obedient to my will;
Nor to surfeit all my days
On the nectar of your praise;
Or to hear it sung so high
That the idle passer-by
Paused to hear your lays.

I but ask you for your faith
That, wounded by the herd,
I may bring you healing with
The magic of a word.
Pray you to believe me so
That in darkness, doubt, or woe,
I may guide you when you grope,
Light you with my stronger hope,
Warm you with my glow.

I would have you love me well,
That, fainting in the strife,
Kiss of mine should be a spell,
To win you back to life;

Love me so that day or night,
I could hide the world from sight,
Keep it out with woven arms,
Or subdue it with my charms,
As a goddess might!

Love! my worth will wax or wane
As your light shall shine,
Now a homely thing, or vain,
Now almost divine.
Lorn of love, my hands hang down,
I am nothing when you frown;
Hold me fair, and keep me great,
With your faithfulness for state,
And your love for crown!

III.—BROKEN LIGHT.

IT was cruel of them to part
Two hearts in the gladsome spring,
Two lovers' hearts that had just burst forth
With each blithe and beautiful thing;
Cruel, but only half—
Had they known how to do us wrong,
They had barr'd the way of the odorous May,
They had shut out the wild bird's song.

Your kisses were so embalm'd
With spices of beech and fir,
That they haunt my lips in the dead o' the night
If the night-winds do but stir;
When I rise with the rising dawn,
To let in the dewy south,
Like a fountain's spray, or the pride of the day,
They fall on my thirsty mouth.

They should never have let our love
  Abroad in the wild free woods,
If they meant it to slumber on, cold and tame,
  As the lock'd-up winter floods;
They should never have let it hide
  'Neath the beeches' lucent shade,
Or the up-turn'd arch of the tender larch
  That blush'd as it heaved and sway'd.

Now the young and passionate year
  Is no longer itself, but *you*;
Its conniving woods, with their raptures and thrills,
  You have leaven'd them through and through.
The troubadour nightingale
  And the dove that o'erbends the bough,
Have both learnt, and teach, the trick of your speech,
  As they echo it vow for vow.

My heart is heavy for scorn,
  Mine eyes with impatient tears,
But the heaven looks blue through the cherry-blooms,
  And preaches away my fears!
From the burning bush of the gorse,
  Alive with murmurous sound,
I hear a voice, and it says, 'Rejoice!
  I stand as on holy ground.

O flower of life! O Love!
  God's love is at thy root;
They may dim thy glory, but cannot blight
  Or hinder thy golden fruit.
Yet all the same, I am mad,
  However the end may fall,
That they dare to wring, in the gladsome spring,
  Two hearts that were gladdest of all.

IV.—IN EXTREMIS.

I LOVE to feel your hand, beloved,
I love to feel your hand;
Then hold me fast until we part
Upon the gloomy strand,
And I upon the silent sea
Go forth alone from love and thee!

I love to see your smile, which says
What else you dare not say:
It gilds for me the gloomy shore,
It seems to light my way.
Brave love, keep back your tears awhile
That parting I may see your smile!

Oh, let me hear your voice, beloved,—
Your face I see no more!
That tender voice still sounds above
The breakers of the shore;
And for a space may follow me
Out, out upon the silent sea!

One kiss upon my lips, sad lips
That cannot kiss thee back,
Let love proclaim his bitter truth—
Bear witness on the rack!
One kiss, the longest and the last,
Resuming all the sacred past!

Oh love that seems to rise as rise
The waters of that sea,
To rise and overflow, and float
My soul, O God, to thee!
Thy voice, thy smile, thy kiss, thy breath,
Beloved, have rapt my soul from death!

V.—A SONG OF WINTER.

BARBED blossom of the guarded gorse,
I love thee where I see thee shine:
Thou sweetener of our common-ways,
And brightener of our wintry days.

Flower of the gorse, the rose is dead,
Thou art undying, O be mine!
Be mine with all thy thorns, and prest
Close on a heart that asks not rest.

I pluck thee and thy stigma set
Upon my breast and on my brow,
Blow, buds, and plenish so my wreath
That none may know the wounds beneath.

O thorny crown of burning gold,
No festal coronal art thou;
Thy honeyed blossoms are but hives
That guard the growth of wingëd lives.

I saw thee in the time of flowers
As sunshine spilled upon the land,
Or burning bushes all ablaze
With sacred fire; but went my ways;

I went my ways, and as I went
Plucked kindlier blooms on either hand;
Now of those blooms so passing sweet
None lives to stay my passing feet.

And yet thy lamp upon the hill
Feeds on the autumn's dying sigh,
And from thy midst comes murmuring
A music sweeter than in spring.

Barbed blossom of the guarded gorse,
Be mine to wear until I die,
And mine the wounds of love which still
Bear witness to his human will.

VI.—WHEN THE BROW OF JUNE.

WHEN the brow of June is crowned by the rose
And the air is faint and fain with her breath,
Then the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes

The Earth hath rest and forgetteth her woes
As she watcheth the cradle of Love and Death,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.

O Love and Death, who are counted for foes,
She sees you twins of one mind and faith—
The Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.

You are twins to the mother who sees and knows;
'Let them strive and thrive together,' she saith,—
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.

They strive, and Love his brother outgrows,
But for strength and beauty he travaileth
On the Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.

And still when his passionate heart o'erflows
Death winds about him a bridal wreath,—
As the brow of June is crowned by the rose!

So the bands of Death true lovers enclose,
For Love and Death are as Sword and Sheath,
When the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

They are Sword and Sheath, they are Life and its Shows
Which lovers have grace to see beneath,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose
And the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

SONNETS.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

I.—EVOLUTION.

HUNGER that strivest in the restless arms
Of the sea-flower, that drivest rooted things
To break their moorings, that unfoldest wings
In creatures to be rapt above thy harms;
Hunger, of whom the hungry-seeming waves
Were the first ministers, till, free to range,
Thou mad'st the Universe thy park and grange,
What is it thine insatiate heart still craves?

Sacred disquietude, divine unrest!
Maker of all that breathes the breath of life,
No unthrift greed spurs thine unflagging zest,
No lust self-slaying hounds thee to the strife;
Thou art the Unknown God on whom we wait:
Thy path the course of our unfolding fate.

II.—TO NATURE. (II.)

DREAD Force, in whom of old we loved to see
A nursing mother, clothing with her life
The seeds of Love divine,—with what sore strife
We hold or yield our thoughts of Love and thee!
Thou art not "calm," but restless as the ocean,
Filling with aimless toil the endless years—
Stumbling on thought, and throwing off the spheres,
Churning the Universe with mindless motion.

Dull fount of joy, unhallowed source of tears,
Cold motor of our fervid faith and song,
Dead, but engendering life, love, pangs, and fears,
Thou crownedst thy wild work with foulest wrong
When first thou lightedst on a seeming goal,
And darkly blundered on man's suffering soul.

III.—DREAMING.

WHEN vexed with waking thought, and its dull gleam,
I—waiting on the shore of Time—oft close
Mine eyes, and while the ocean ebbs and flows
Around me, hear its murmurous voice, and dream.
And sometimes dreaming thus, the Will supreme
My thoughts have bent beneath, will seem to be
A Will, not working by its sole decree,
But one that wrestles with a counter-stream.

And dreaming thus, my heart will give a bound
Of yearning love, and wake me with a cry;
Oh for the feet of Hermes that I might—
A chartered messenger—spurn back the ground
And through the reeling world be charged to fly,
With but one word to help Him in the fight.

IV.—THE WINGED SOUL.

MY soul is like some cage-born bird, that hath
A restless prescience—howsoever won—
Of a broad pathway leading to the sun,
With promptings of an oft reprovèd faith
In sun-ward yearnings. Stricken through her breast,
And faint her wing with beating at the bars
Of sense, she looks beyond outlying stars,
And only in the Infinite sees rest.

Sad soul! If ever thy desire be bent
Or broken to thy doom, and made to share
The ruminant's beatitude,—content,—
Chewing the cud of knowledge, with no care
For germs of life within; *then* will I say,
Thou art not caged, but fitly *stalled* in clay!

V.-VI.—PEACE TO THE ODALISQUE.

I.

PEACE to the odalisque, the facile slave,
Whose unrespective love rewards the brave,
Or cherishes the coward; she who yields
Her lord the fief of waste, uncultured fields
To fester in non-using; she whose hour
Is measured by her beauty's transient flower;
Who lives in man, as he in God, and dies
His parasite, who shuts her from the skies.
Graceful ephemera! Fair morning dream
Of the young world! In vain would women's hearts,
In love with sacrifice, withstand the stream
Of human progress; other spheres, new parts
Await them. God be with them in their quest—
Our brave, sad working-women of the West.

II.

Peace to the odalisque, whose morning glory
Is vanishing, to be alone in story;
Firm in her place, a dull-robed figure stands,
With wistful eyes, and earnest, grappling hands:
The working-woman, she whose soul and brain—
Her tardy right—are bought with honest pain.
Oh woman! sacrifice may still be thine—
More fruitful than the souls ye did resign
To sated masters; from your lives, so real,
Will shape itself a pure and high ideal,
That ye will seek with sad, wide-open eyes,
Till, finding nowhere, baffled love shall rise
To higher planes, where passion may look pale,
But charity's white light shall never fail.

VII.—TO THE HERALD HONEYSUCKLE.

DEEP Honeysuckle! in the silent eve
When wild-rose cups are closed, and when each bird
Is sleeping by its mate, then all unheard,
The dew's soft kiss thy wakeful lips receive.
'Tis then the sighs that throng them seem to weave
A spell whereby the drowsy night is stirred
To fervid meanings, which no fullest word
Of speech or song so sweetly could achieve.

Herald of bliss! whose fragrant trumpet blew
Love's title to our hearts ere love was known,
'Twas well thy flourish told a tale so true,
Well that love's dazzling presence was foreshown;
Had his descent on us been as the dew
On thee, our rarer sense he had o'erthrown.

VIII.—GORDON.

THE UNREQUITABLE.

GONE, with the toil of nigh twelve months undōne,
Cut from thy grasp by sloth and treachery,
When friendly hands across that sandy sea
To reach thee at thy post had all but won.
Gone when thy hope was high as Egypt's sun,
From sting of failure and all charge set free,
A man no king was great enough to fee—
God's Servant, taking wage of Him alone.

Gordon, we may not give thee so much earth
As might suffice thy bones for resting-place,
But must remain thy debtors in our dearth;
Souls pure as thine are channels of God's grace,
And all our famished lives must grow more worth
When such have dwelt among us for a space.

IX.-X.—SHELLEY.

It will be remembered that Pisa, associated as it is with Shelley, was the scene of the life and labours of Galileo.

THERE lies betwixt dead Pisa and the sea
A haunted forest, with a heart so deep,
That none could sit beneath its pines to weep,
But it would throb for them mysteriously.
Here, in this place I dreamed there met with me
The spirit who his part in it doth keep,
Albeit his starry orbit now hath sweep
As vast as Galileo's, if more free.

He drew me on to where the hollow beat
Of waves upon a shore seemed to my mind
The moan of a remorseful soul, to meet
The homicidal Sea, whose passion blind
Had slain him; as it writhed about my feet
Methought his spirit past me on the wind.

II.

Wild sea, that drank his life to quench the thirst
Thou had'st of him; and all devouring Fire,
Who made his body thine with love as dire;
Air pregnate with his breath, and thou accurst,
Mother of Sorrows, Earth, whose claim is first
Upon thy children dead, who from the pyre
Received his dust,—what did his soul require—
Wring from ye—ere your Protean bonds he burst?

Perchance ye failed to reach him, and he hath
O'er-leapt the rounds of change the earthlier dead
May weary through, nor needing Lethean bath
To speed anew his soul's etherial tread,
Hath left the elements, spurned from his path,
To challenge grosser spirits in his stead.

XI.-XII.—THE LOST LIGHT.

(George Eliot.)

December 29th, 1880.

I.

I NEVER touched thy royal hand, dead queen,
But from afar have looked upon thy face,
Which, calm with conquest, carried still the trace
Of many a hard-fought battle that had been.
Since thou hast done with life, its toil and teen,
Its pains and gains, and that no further grace
Can come to us of thee, a poorer place
Shows the lorn world,—a dimlier lighted scene.

Lost queen and captain, Pallas of our band,
Who late upon the height of glory stood,
Guarding from scorn—the ægis in thy hand—
The banner of insurgent womanhood;
Who of our cause may take the high command?
Who make with shining front our victory good?

II.

Great student of the schools, who grew to be
The greater teacher, having wandered wide
In lonely strength of purity and pride
Through pathless sands, unfruitful as the sea.
Now warning words—and one clear act of thee,
Bold pioneer who shouldst have been our guide—
Affirm the track which Wisdom must abide;—
For man is bond, the beast alone is free.

So hast thou sought a larger good, so won
Thy way to higher law, that by thy grave
We thanking thee for lavish gifts, for none
May owe thee more than that in quest so brave—
True to a light our onward feet must shun—
Thou gavest nobler strength our strength to save.

Sarah Williams.

("*Sadie.*")

1841—1868.

SARAH WILLIAMS, better known to many readers as "Sadie" (under which *nom de plume* she wrote during her life), was born in London in 1841. Her father was of Welsh extraction, and she to the end regarded that as the source of the "bardic" element in her. She was an only child, and from the first much attention was paid to her nurture and education. After having been for some time under governesses, she went to Queen's College, Harley Street, where one of the teachers was Dr. Plumptre, late Dean of Wells, to whom she always attributed much impulse to authorship. He was one of the first to whom she showed her earliest printed book. Acquaintance being thus renewed, he aided and advised her in many ways, and afterwards wrote the little biography of her which is prefixed to her volume "Twilight Hours." There was little change or incident in her life; it was that of the student and author, though I should not omit to say that she took a very keen interest in many forms of work among the poor, and dedicated to such work one-half of all she earned by her pen. "God's money" she called it. Happily, she was pretty well independent, for her father had been very successful in life.

She was deeply attached to him, and she never fully recovered from the shock of his sudden death, after a few days' illness that occasioned but little concern, in January 1868. She herself was even then suffering from an incurable disease, which so far as possible she hid from her mother and friends, to save them pain. At last the fact had to be faced that an operation, which if successful might save her life, must be undergone. She made up her mind to submit to it, and succumbed under it only five months after her father's death.

Sarah Williams is distinguished by originality, breadth, and versatility. She wrote many songs and hymns, touched with a mingled simplicity and subtlety, which greatly attracted the late Rev. F. D. Maurice, as well as the late Dean Plumptre. Her mind was very active; her sympathies were at once wide and keen. She tried to enter into and to understand the positions of others, and not only so, but to realise the determining motives, and even the evanescent fluctuations of feeling and sentiment, which do so much to modify habit and conduct, and so often impart an air of irresolution. Hence in a great portion of her poetic work she was really dramatic, though she loved to abide by the lyric form. Her longest and most sustained work is entitled "Sospiri Volate"; and it is really a dialogue (in a series of songs) between two lovers. In the course of this dialogue, many of the flying phases of human emotion that so mark an artificial age like ours are caught and cunningly presented. She had, like the hero of "In Memoriam," "faced the spectres of the mind and laid them," and "would not make her judgment blind"; and the sense

of this imparts a reality and even a fascination to some of her poems.

With Dr. George Macdonald, whom she admired, but from whom she often differed, she could say,—

> "The man that feareth, Lord, to doubt,
> In that fear doubteth Thee."

In the sections of her poems headed "Questionings," "Responses," and "Broken Chords" this is very keenly felt: we realise that we are in contact with a very serious and penetrating nature, though it could be cheerful and humorous on occasion. Many of her most effective pieces, indeed, show the struggle with theological dogmas in many forms. The great interest she had for men like Maurice and Plumptre is thus accounted for. She often sets into clear and musical form what must have been vaguely present to such minds in many circumstances. Her poem, "Is it so, O, Christ in Heaven?" is an illustration of what we have just said.

Her humour is sometimes as fine as it is unexpected, and when she allied it with the lightsome fancy she could so well command, in the writing of children's poems, she was not seldom especially felicitous.

Her children's poems, indeed, are so original, and so marked by fancy, gaiety, and fun, that they alone would have justified her appearance in such a selection as this; but some idea of her range and the firmness with which she touched the various strings of the lyre may be realised by turning from these children's verses to such powerful and impressive pieces as that entitled "Baal," "At the

Breach," "The Old Astronomer," "The Coast-guard's Story," or "The Roundhead's Chant." Indeed, in some of her pieces there is a direct dramatic strength, a power of what has been called "vicarious thinking," such as is seldom found in a woman together with the highly-strung, sensitive, impassioned thrill which goes for so much in what has been called the "lyrical cry."

Her volume titled "Twilight Hours: A Legacy of Verse" is a kind of autobiography indeed. It is one of the books written from a woman's heart. She died whilst she was engaged in the work of arranging her poems for press, so that they are in the truest sense her legacy. This work was finished by the present writer, and Dean Plumptre, as already stated, wrote a Prefatory Memoir of her, in which he quoted extensively from a memorial sketch contributed by the present writer to the pages of *Good Words* shortly after her death. A third edition of her poems appeared in 1872 with additions, and a note by "H. A. Page" respecting these additions. Probably she owed something to the strain of Welsh blood she received from her father; but it was qualified and supported by genuine English sense and sober thought. Some of her hymns—more especially "God's Way," which is quoted in this volume—are inspired by the truest religious experience.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

TWILIGHT HOURS.

SARAH WILLIAMS.

I.—SOSPIRI VOLATE.

I.

QUIETNESS.

(MARGARET.)

IS the world so very sad a place?
Looking out here through geranium leaves,
We can see the sky all rosy grace,
And can feel, what one of us believes,
That He giveth His belovèd sleep —
Not in death alone we cease to weep.

Softly, shining cloudlets come and go,
While the blue shows deeper in between,
And the very sunset leaves a glow
Lovelier than all rays the day has seen:
Flecks of light make blossoms on the floor.
Silent music wraps us o'er and o'er.

Still and quiet, with intensest calm,
As the centre of all motion rests;
So we breathe away those hours of balm,
Rise with strengthened hearts within our breasts.
Go, dear, but remember, through all weather,
We are friends—we were in Heaven together.

II.

YOUTH AND MAIDENHOOD.

(GREGORY.)

LIKE a drop of water is my heart
Laid upon her soft and rosy palm,
Turned whichever way her hand doth turn,
Trembling in an ecstasy of calm.

Like a broken rose-leaf is my heart,
  Held within her close and burning clasp,
Breathing only dying sweetness out,
  Withering beneath the fatal grasp.

Like a vapoury cloudlet is my heart
  Growing into beauty near the sun,
Gaining rainbow hues in her embrace,
  Melting into tears when it is done.

Like mine own dear harp is this my heart,
  Dumb, without the hand that sweeps its strings;
Though the hand be careless or be cruel,
  When it comes, my heart breaks forth and sings

II.—*THE LIFE OF A LEAF.*

(From "Nature Apostate.")

I.—The Bud.

CLOSE within a downy cover
  Here at rest I lie,
Half awake and half in slumber
  While the storms go by.

Sometimes vague impatient strivings
  Stir my life within;
Hopes of being something worthy,
  Longing to begin.

Then again a soft contentment
  Broodeth o'er my state;
When the time comes I am ready,
  Until then I wait.

II.—The Leaflet.

Is this then life? 'Tis glorious, so fair!
The sweet soft breezes playing round our rest,
The summer fragrance growing everywhere,
The happy birds low cooing in their nest.

What meant the fear with which we put on life?
It is all good, and hope comes after joy;
Come anything in this delightsome strife,
Storms cannot daunt us, sunshine cannot cloy.

III.—Summer Leaf.

Kiss me, kiss me, kingly sun,
Till I glow with crimson light,
Till along my veins shall run
Liquid lustre glistening bright.

Let thy touch so piercing sweet
Hold me close and thrill me through,
Till I faint with languid heat,
Till for rest from thee I sue;
Hear me not, O king of light!
Let me die within thy sight.

IV.—Autumn Leaf.

I wonder what has vanished from the world,
It was so bright a little while ago;
And now we leaves upon the branches curled
Hang wearily, just swaying to and fro.

The sun shines on, the cruel biting sun,
He will not veil one smile to ease our pain;
What matter that, so his great course is run?
The subjects suffer, but the king must reign:
We are too weary even to complain.

V.—Fallen.

The desperate clutch at the last weak hold
Grows looser and looser and looser;
The dizzying leap into depths untold
Comes closer and closer and closer

Quivering, shivering,
Drawn from below,
Where shall we vanish to?
How shall we go?

Leaving the upper air,
Heaviness everywhere,
Fallen on dull despair,
Here we lie low.

VI.—Asleep.

Let me sleep, it is so sweet to slumber,—
All of sweetness that remaineth still;
Swift the drenching rains and frosts of winter
Rid the earth of worn-out things of ill.

It may be some good there was within us
May survive this discipline of pain;
May not die but change its outward substance
May revive in other leaves again.

III.—AT THE BREACH.

(From "Songs of Comrades.")

ALL over for me
The struggle, and possible glory!
All swept past,
In the rush of my own brigade.
Will charges instead,
And fills up my place in the story;
Well,—'tis well,
By the merry old games we played.

There's a fellow asleep, the lout! in the shade of the hillock yonder;
What a dog it must be to drowse in the midst of a time like this!
Why, the horses might neigh contempt at him; what is he like, I wonder?
If the smoke would but clear away, I have strength in me yet to hiss.

Will, comrade and friend,
We parted in hurry of battle;
All I heard
Was your sonorous "Up, my men!"
Soon conquering pæans
Shall cover the cannonade's rattle;
Then, home bells,
Will you think of me sometimes, then?

How that rascal enjoys his snooze! Would he wake to the touch of powder?
A reveillé of broken bones, or a prick of a sword might do.

"Hai, man! the general wants you;" if I could but
for once call louder:
There is something infectious here, for my eyelids
are dropping too.

Will, can you recall
The time we were lost on the Bright Down?
Coming home late in the day,
As Susie was kneeling to pray,
Little blue eyes and white night-gown,
Saying, "Our Father, who art,—
Art what?" so she stayed with a start.
"In Heaven," your mother said softly.
And Susie sighed "So far away!"—
'Tis nearer, Will, now to us all.

It is strange how that fellow sleeps! stranger still
that his sleep should haunt me;
If I could but command his face, to make sure of the
lesser ill:
I will crawl to his side and see, for what should
there be to daunt me?
What there? what there! Holy Father in Heaven,
not Will!

Will, dead Will!
Lying here, I could not feel you!
Will, brave Will!
Oh, alas, for the noble end!
Will, dear Will!
Since no love nor remorse could heal you,
Will, good Will!
Let me die on your breast, old friend!

IV.—THE COAST-GUARD'S STORY.

(From "Songs of Comrades."

OUT on the isle of Mona,
Mona with rocks so red,
For the sins of the wreckers who preyed there once,
So the tradition said,

There lived a sturdy coast-guard,
Watching the whole night long;
And he sang to the sea, to the sea sang he,
This was his simple song:—

"Only over the sea,
Only over the sea!
There my love doth dwell, she that loves me well,
Waiting and looking for me."

Singing away the darkness,
Unto the dawning white,
When the sea-gulls came screaming, "A—i—e. 'Tis day!"
Bats shivered, "Woe for night!"

Out of the waning darkness,
Driven before the sun,
A ship came drifting, and drifting fast,
A ship with never a sail nor mast,
All of its voyage done.

The coast-guard waited with hands fast clenched,
Visage a purple white,
"Something is here that I needs must fear,
After my dream last night."

The ship came closer, the skeleton ship—
Tangle of shattered ropes,

Fragments of scattered hopes,
Did round its timbers cling;
Among the shrouds, in a hammock of wreck,
A dead man's form did swing.

The coast-guard sprang with his heavy strength,
And bore the body down;
He drew it in to a tomb-like rock,—
The dead man seemed to frown.

The ship went curtseying back to sea,
Like one whose task was done;
The coast-guard stood, in a daze stood he,
Before the blinding sun.

Of all he rescued from out the sea
He saw one hand alone;
On all the hand he could only see
One well-remembered stone.

"O ring!" the coast-guard cried,
"How hast thou come to this?
The ring I gave her, my promised bride,
With many a tear and kiss?

"Man, didst thou slay my wife?
Though thou wert three times dead
I would avenge her, would claim thy life
For each dear hair of her head.

"Or did she give my ring?
How could such vileness be?
Man, with the truth at your black false heart,
Declare it now to me!"—
The dead man smiled with an awful calm,
And not a word said he.

"If she be false! O God,
Thou who the truth canst tell."
The coast-guard swayed like a tree up-torn,
And on his knees he fell.

He grasped the fingers stiff,
And loosed them one by one;
The dead man's hand was a faithful hand,
Its work was nearly done.

A letter, held till now,
Dropped from the open palm;
The case was sealed with the coast-guard's name—
He read in dream-like calm.

"Love," so it ran, "I am writing,
Writing our last Good-bye;
I send the ring by a trusty hand,
For they say I must die, must die.

Do not be broken-hearted,
Lover so true, so dear;
The pain is nothing,—I think of you,
And I know that you fain were here.

But you must hold your post, dear
Must not be ruined for me;
Before my letter can reach you, love,
I shall see you across the sea.

"Only a little while, dear,
You will be free, be free!
We two shall meet on the golden street,
In the city that knows no sea.
Love, true love!
Be happy, not sad, for me."

The letter dropt from his palsied hand,
Two men lay stretched on the shifting strand
Like brothers lay, in a close embrace,
The cold sea-spray on each pale, pale face.
But the one to whom living meant only pain,
Was the one to be laden with life again.

Many a year has vanished;
Grey is the coast-guard now,
With a shadowy smile in his tender eyes,
Strength on his patient brow.

Still at his work he paces,
Watching the whole night long;
And the birds, his companions, asleep on high,
Hear not his passionate song.

"Only over the sea,
Only over the sea!
There my love doth dwell, she that loves me well,
Waiting and looking for me."

V.—IS IT SO, O CHRIST IN HEAVEN?

(From "Questionings.")

IS it so, O Christ in heaven, that the souls we loved so well
Must remain in pain eternal, must abide in endless hell?
And our love avail them nothing, even Thine avail no more?
Is there nothing that can reach them,—nothing bridge the chasm o'er?—
"I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that the Antichrist
must reign?
Still assuming shapes Protean, dying but to live
again?
Waging war on God Almighty, by destroying feeble
man,
With the heathen for a rear-guard, and the learnèd
for the van?—
"I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear
them now."

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that the highest suffer
most?
That the strongest wander farthest, and more hope-
lessly are lost?
That the mark of rank in nature is capacity for
pain,
And the anguish of the singer makes the sweetness
of the strain?—
"I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear
them now."

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that whichever way we
go
Walls of darkness must surround us, things we would
but cannot know?
That the Infinite must bound us, as a temple veil
unrent,
While the Finite ever wearies, so that none attain
content?—
"I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear
them now."

Is it so, O Christ in heaven, that the fulness yet to come
Is so glorious and so perfect, that to know would strike us dumb?
That, if only for a moment, we could pierce beyond the sky
With these poor dim eyes of mortals, we should just see God, and die?—
"I have many things to show you, but ye cannot bear them now."

VI.—BY COMMAND.

(From "Child Poems.")

MY king sat out on his castle wall,
And a royal command gave he:
"Come hither, come hither, ye people all,
And a fairy tale bring me,
For of grammar, and crammer, and orthodox hammer,
I have had quite enough," quoth he.

My liege's kingdom is small as yet,
And his subjects are only two;
And sometimes it happens his Grace will fret,
"Why, you dear, I have only you!"
And in such sad case it becomes my place
The imperial will to do.

So I peeled a willow, so white, so white,
The wand that the fairies love;
And I gathered the meadow-sweet, soft and light,
And the fox's crimson glove;
And I made a couch for the first stray sprite,
With the down of a silver dove.

"Fairy, come home!
Fairy, come home!
Where hast thou wandered to?
Where dost thou roam?

"Here is thy dwelling,
Here is thy place;
Fairy king, fairy king,
Show us thy face!"

Three times round the meadow
The little song did go;
Then there came a peal of bells
Chiming soft and low:

"Coming, coming, coming,
No one need to wait,
Wearily beseeching,
At the fairy gate.

"For the fairies, like the mortals
Love to be loved;
And the fairy palace portals
Lightly are moved."

Then a rain of footsteps
Sounded on the sward,
And a page came kneeling—
"What wills my lord?"

"I will a tournament," said he,
"Where no one shall be killed;
Where all shall gain the victory,
And be supremely skilled."

Up rode a fairy paladin,
With coat of beetle's mail;
Before the glistening green and gold
Sure any heart must quail.

"I see no foe," the king complained,
"But wait," the page implored.
And then the fairy paladin
Drew out a shining sword;

He cut and thrust all round about,
At neither sight nor sound,
Until a dastard knight they saw
Lie dead upon the ground.

"The pledge is broken!" cried the king.
"Not so," the knight replied,
"It was my meaner self I slew,—
I live, though it has died."

Again the paladin rode forth,
And this time seemed to seek
Some traitor that eluded him—
The little king must speak;
"Where is the foe, Sir Knight, on whom
You would your vengeance wreak?"

"It was a falsehood," said the knight,
"They uttered of my friend;
I tracked it down, and hunted it,
And thus its life doth end!"

Once more the paladin rode forth—
Beneath his horse's feet
There seemed to be an enemy
That he was loth to meet!

"Can you fear anything, Sir Knight?"
His smile was sad and sweet.

"It was a cruel injury,
An unforgiven pain;
But there it lieth tranquilly,—
It will not stir again."

Then lightly springs my little king,
And merrily he sings,
"I too will be a paladin,
And fight with evil things."

VII.—MARJORY'S WEDDING

(From "Child Poems.")

MARJORY made her a wedding feast,
"And I am to be the bride," said she.
"Wait for the bridegroom," was whispered then;
"What does that matter?" said Marjorie.

Marjory gathered the peaches fine,
That dropped in the sun behind the tree.
"Where is your husband to share the feast?"
"I can eat peaches," said Marjorie.

Feasting makes fractious, and some one said,
"The wives that are beaten, better be."
Marjory kissed at the mirror's face;
"There is my beating," said Marjorie.

"If you were pretty, would you be good?"
So somebody said to Marjory.
"I cannot tell," said the maiden wild;
"Plenty of people are good, you see."

Softly the sunset crept over the hill,
Soft, like a shadow-land, glistened the sea;
Two little hands 'neath a head bent down
"I am so tired!" said Marjorie.

VIII.—GROWTH.

(From "Responses.")

A LONELY rock uprose above the sea,
The coral insects fretting at its base;
And no man came unto its loneliness,
The very storm-birds shunned its evil case.
Only the ocean beat upon its breast,
Only the ocean gave it close embrace.

An island was upheaved towards the skies,
A central fire within its heart had burst;
The rock became a mountain, stern and strong,
Only the desolation shewed at first;
A stray bird dropped a seed that fructified,
No longer reigned the barrenness accursed.

A little world stood out among the seas,
With singing brooks and many a fragrant wood,
Where lovers heard again their story sweet,
And truth grew fair, more fully understood.
The tender flowers o'ergrew the chasms deep,
And God looked down, and saw that it was good.

IX.—GOD'S WAY.

(From "Responses.")

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord."

I SAID, "The darkness shall content my soul;"
God said, "Let there be light."
I said, "The night shall see me reach my goal;"
Instead came dawning bright.

I bared my head to meet the smiter's stroke:
  There came sweet dropping oil.
I waited, trembling, but the voice that spoke,
  Said gently, "Cease thy toil."

I looked for evil, stern of face and pale;
  Came good, too fair to tell.
I leant on God when other joys did fail;
  He gave me these as well.

X.—WITH GOD.

(From "Responses.")

GOOD Lord, no strength I have, nor need;
  Within Thy light I lie,
And grow like herb in sunny place,
  While outer storms go by.

Thy pleasant rain my soul doth feed—
  Thy love like summer rain;
I faint, but lo thy winds of grace
  Revive my soul again.

I fain would give some perfume out,
  Some bruisèd scent of myrrh;
But Thou art close at hand, my Lord—
  I need not strive nor stir.

I cannot fear, and need not doubt,
  Though I be weak and low:
If Thou didst will, a mighty sword
  From out my stem should grow.

Thou hast Thy glorious forest trees,
  Thy things of worth and power;
But it may be Thy plan were marred
  Had I ne'er lived a flower.

Thy promise, like an evening breeze,
Doth fold my leaves in sleep;
Who trusts, the Lord will surely guard,
Who loves, the Lord will keep.

XI.—PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

"THEY killed him then? the cowards—be it so!
Henceforth he is immortal—President,
Until the dead shall waken: none may know
His term of office now, nor how 'tis spent.

"His life is rounded off and perfect now;
It reached its fitting climax when great Death
Herself stooped down to crown the victor's brow,
And set the seal of silence on his breath.

"Nor foe nor friend can fret him into speech;
He shines as calmly as some distant star,
Whose light these lower worlds of ours can reach,
While not a cloud doth e'er extend so far.

"Silent and grand, embalmed in suffering,
What monarch ever lay in state like this?
We dare not weep, we hear the angels sing,
Exultant, as they welcome him to bliss."

Mary M. Singleton.

("*Violet Fane.*")

1843—1905.

MRS. MARY MONTGOMERIE SINGLETON, better known to the public as "Violet Fane," was born in 1843. She was a daughter of the late C. J. S. Montgomerie Lamb—only child of Sir Charles Montolieu Lamb, Bart., by Mary Montgomerie, daughter and heiress of Archibald, 11th Earl of Eglinton. She has written much, and has in some lines of work received the best proof of public acceptance—her books have sold. She was the author of several novels, some of which are exceptionally attractive by their fresh views of life and careful delineations of character. She was the author, too, of a drama titled "Anthony Babington," which, if it is ambitious in its scheme and aim, contains passages of remarkable power. Denzil Place: A Story in Verse" shows uncommon facility and resource, and has here and there pictures and lyrical turns that tell of real imagination, while it escapes the somewhat broad, almost Hudibrastic boldness of such tales in verse as "Mrs. Jerningham's Journal"—which, though very orginal, err, by failing to mark off definitely enough the lines of verse from those of prose. Mrs. Singleton also published several volumes of poetry pure and simple.

From a study of these, we come to the conclusion that "Violet Fane" was a singer, and a thinker as well. Her muse not only treasured up observations of life and nature, and turned them to good account; but the "painful riddle of the earth" was much with her. She brooded over inequalities in the lot of man—the fortune that deals out wealth to one and poverty to another, with which merit apparently has nought to do. The sorrow for which there is no anodyne, the regret for which there is no remedy, the pain for which there is no salve, and the remorseful remembrance for which there is no nepenthe, insisted on being present with her and colouring her life, and consequently her poetry. The ministry of the past to the present—as though the present was the inevitable full-flower of the past—is an idea that comes out in many of her poems. It is the burden of the first of our Selections, titled "Time." Inevitably, therefore, much of "Violet Fane's" poetry is set in a minor key: she was artist enough to relieve this by many devices of metre (of which she had considerable command), her poems flowing with a sense as of easy freedom. Occasionally she essayed blank verse, and with more success than has fallen to the lot of many women. Her poems were published in two volumes, 1902.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

"Violet Fane," whose maiden name was Mary Montgomerie Lamb, became afterwards Mrs. Singleton and subsequently Lady Currie, and died in October, 1905.

POEMS.

VIOLET FANE.

I.—TIME.

I.

OF Time what may a poet sing,
Who sees his seasons come and go,
With heart that falters and eyes askance?
Who reads with sad prophetic glance
The pitiful tale of the dead rose-garden
All folded away in the buds of the spring,
And dreams, awake, of the summer glow,
Whilst snow-flakes fall, and whilst hoar-frosts harden,
Yet hopes for nothing from change or chance,—
How may a poet sing, and *know?*

II.

Let him rise and tune to a mingled measure,
Blood and roses alike bloom red—
Pleasure in pain, and pain in pleasure—
Bitter the hunger, and bitter the bread
Time will tarnish a tawdry treasure,
Turn gold to silver, and silver to lead;
Rise up and tune to a mingled measure:
Of Time, our master, what may be said?

III.

Boy and girl, we have played together,
Hearts in slumber, and heads in air—
Maiden trim with the floating feather,
Sailor-lad, with a future clear,
Snatching a kiss as he climbed the stair—
('Kiss me,' he said, on the twilight stair,
Half for pastime, and half in sorrow)—
Sailor-lad, that would sail to-morrow
Out to the uttermost hemisphere.
A few hot tears, and a lock of hair,
And a widowed heart in the summer weather,
A widowed heart for the half of a year,
And the satisfied sense of a secret care,
Whilst squirrels were sporting and thrushes sung,
And the old folks whispered and gossiped together,
Each one snug in an easy-chair,
And murmured low, 'Beware, beware!
Not a word of this, lest the child should hear;'
Heart of my heart! it was good to be young!

IV.

Good ships have foundered the whole world over,
For the sea is a grave, and some hearts are sore
For stately ship and for sailor-lover
That never again come back to the shore.
But the maid is a bride, and the bride a mother
(Bud, and blossom, and blown-out flower),
And the new-born lives, one after another,
Are a-dance, like motes, in the sunlit hour;
But the two arm-chairs stand there as witness,

Though the babes and the sucklings clamber and crow:
'Tis the nature of all things in their fitness—
They were both of them old, it was time they
should go.'

v.

But *we*—we are young, we have time to linger
By pleasant pathways from Yule to June,
So never heed Time, with his warning finger
And shifting glass; for it is but noon!
So pipe and sing to a blithesome tune,
Though it be as the song of the wandering singer,
Who loiters awhile, but who does not stay;
Or the fatal vow of the faithless lover,
Who loves, and kisses, and rides away;
Or the notes of the nightingale trilling in May,
Or the chirp of the grasshopper hid in the clover,
That wists not when they will mow the hay,
Nor knows when the nightingale's singing is over.

VI.

Yet were it well that these should know?
A sorry world if all were wise—
If all life's finger-posts were plain,
And all the blind could find their eyes
To see that Wisdom's self is vain!
Nay, let the hour unchallenged go,
For wisdom cometh unaware,
When, coy at first, as violet hidden,
Or guest, unto the feast unbidden,
Death's messenger, the silver hair,
Glistens alike in brown and gold.
Alas, old friend, are the sands so low?
Alas, my love, it is even so! . . .
And can it be that *we* too are old?

VII.

Yea, sit we down in the old folks' chair,
And watch we the little ones crow and clamber;
We have woven yew-garlands for sunny hair,
And put out the lights in the bridal chamber;
And hand in hand, and with dimming eyes
Wait we, and watch in the dusk together,
O love, my love of the summer weather,
Heart of my heart, who wert once so fair!
No more of toiling, no more of spinning,
No more heart-beatings, no more surprise;
For the end is foreseen from the first beginning,
The castle is fall'n ere its turrets rise—
Ah, love, my love, it is sad to be wise!

VIII.

But Time, our master, stands winged and hoary,
And seeming to smile as he whets his blade;
Whilst Love is whisp'ring the same old story,
And Hope seems shrinking and half afraid;
For of these the measure of youth is made,
And the measure of pleasure, the measure of glory
Which is meted out to a human lot;
And so on to the end (and the end draws nearer),
When our souls may be freer, our senses clearer
('Tis an old world creed which is nigh forgot),
When the eyes of the sleepers may waken in wonder,
And the hearts may be joined that were riven asunder,
And Time and Love shall be merged—in what?

II.—DIVIDED.

THEY did not quarrel; but betwixt them came
Combining circumstances, urging on
Towards the final ending of their loves.
Could they have smote and stung with bitter words,
Then sued for pardon on a blotted page,
And met, and kissed, and dried their mutual tears,
This had not been. But every day the breach
Widened without their knowledge. Time went by,
And led their footsteps into devious paths,
Each one approving, nay, with waving hand
Praying God-speed the other, since both roads
Seemed fair, and led away from sordid things,
And each one urged the other on to fame.
He was a very Cæsar for ambition;
And she, a simple singer in the woods,—
Athirst for Nature—ever needing her
To crown a holiday, and sanctify
As with a mother's blessing, idle hours.
A bramble-blossom trailing in the way
Seemed more to her than all his talk of Courts
And Kings and Constitutions; but his aims
Rose far above the soaring of the lark,
That leaves the peeping daisy out of sight.
The State required him, and he could not stay
Loit'ring and ling'ring in the 'primrose path
Of dalliance;' and so it came to pass,
These two, that once were one, are two again,
And she is lone in spirit, having known
A sweeter thing than pipe of nightingale
Or scent of hawthorn, and yet loving these
And clinging to them still, though desolate,

And, like the lady of the 'Lord of Burleigh;'
Lacking the 'Landscape-painter' in her life.
Thus, all her songs are sad—of withered leaves,
And blighted hopes, and echoes of the past,
And early death; and yet she cannot die,
But lives and sings, as he, too, lives and climbs,
Far from the sight of waving meadow-grass;
And so they walk divided.

Were it well
So soon to sever such a tender tie,
With never a reproach and none to blame,
And not one tear? With friendly greetings now
At careless meetings, cold and unforeseen,
As though no better days had ever dawned;
And all—for what? . . . .

Nay, be it for the best!
Who knows, if we love well till we regret
And sigh, in sadness, for a good thing gone?
Thus, all may work to wisdom.

Wherefore, wake
With wind-strewn cuckoo-bloom and daffodil,
Fond foolish love of spring-tide and hot youth,
And die when these have perished! . . . .

III.—A REVERIE.

BY the side of a ruined terrace
I sat in the early spring;
The leaves were so young that the speckled hen-thrush
Could be seen as she sat in the hawthorn bush,
Falt'ring and faint at the cuckoo's cry;
The cypress looked black against the green
Of folded chestnut and budding beech,

And up from the slumbering vale beneath
Came now and again the ominous ring
Of a passing bell for a village death.
Yet a spirit of hope went whispering by,
Through the wakening woods, o'er the daisied
mead;
And up in the stem of the strait Scotch fir
An insolent squirrel, in holiday brush,
Went scampering gaily, at utmost speed,
To gnaw at his fir-apples out of reach.
All seemed so full of life and stir,
Of twitter and twinkle, and shimmer and sheen,
That I closed my book, for I could not read;
So I sat me down to muse instead,
By the side of the ruined terrace,
In the breath of the early spring.

Alas that the sound of a passing bell,
(Only proclaiming some villager's death),
As it echoes up from the valley beneath,
Should summon up visions of trestle and shroud!
And pity it is that yon marble urn,
Fall'n and broken should seem to tell
Of days that are done with, and may not return
Whatever the future shall chance to be!
Hollow and dead as the empty shell
Of last year's nut as it lies on the grass,
Or the frail laburnum's withered seed,
That hang like felons on gallows-tree:
This is a truth that half aloud
We may but murmur with bated breath:
How many sat as I sit to-day,
In the vanished hours of the olden time,
Watching the Spring in her early prime

Beam, and blossom, and go her way!
Squirrels that sport and doves that coo,
And leaves that twinkle against the blue,
A green woodpecker and screeching jay,
Ye are purposeless things that perish and pass,
Yet you wanton and squander your transient day,—
My soul is sickened at sight of you!
'I had rather be shrouded and coffined and dead'
(To my innermost soul I, sighing, said)
'Than know no pleasure save love and play!'
Then all seemed so full of the odour of Death
(Though I smelt the gorse-blossom blown from the heath),
That I opened my book and tried to read,
Since my soul was too saddened to muse instead,
By the side of the ruined terrace,
In the breath of the early spring.

I wonder now if it could be right
For the Great First Cause to let such things be?
To plan this blending of black and white,—
(I know for myself I had made *all* bright!)
And to mould me, and make me, and set me here,
Without my leave and against my will,
With never so much as a word in mine ear
As to how I may pilot my bark through the night?
Was it well, I wonder, or was it ill,
That I should feel such a wish to be wise,
And dream of flying, and long for sight,
With faltering footsteps and bandaged eyes,
To be blamed the more that I may not see,
As I stagger about in a wilderness,
And know no more than the worms and the flies?
I feel at my heart that it is not right—

'Nothing is right and nothing is just;
We sow in ashes and reap the dust;
I think, on the whole, I would rather be
The wandering emmet, that loses its way
On the desert-plain of my muslin-dress,
Than be moulded as either woman or man.'
(All this I said in my bitterness.)
'Yet who is to help me and who is to blame?'
But just at that moment a hurrying sound,
A sound as of hurrying pattering feet,
In the dry leaves under the hawthorn bush,
Troubled the heart of the speckled hen-thrush,
Whilst the love-sick pigeon that called to her mate,
And the green woodpecker and screeching jay,
Outspread their wings and flew scared away;
And on a sudden, with leap and bound,
My neighbour's collie, marked black and tan,
Sprang panting into the garden seat,
His collar aglow with my neighbour's name!
So my neighbour himself cannot be far,
Ah, I care not now how wrong things are! . . .
I know I am ignorant, foolish, amd small
As this wandering emmet that climbs my dress,
Yet I know that now I had answered 'Yes,'
(Were I asked my will by the Father of all);
'I desire to be, I am glad to be born!'
And all because, on a soft May morn,
My neighbour's collie-dog, black and tan,
Leapt over the privet-hedge, and ran
With a rush, and a cry, and a bound to my side,
And because I saw his master ride
(Laying spurs to his willing horse)
Over the flaming yellow gorse.
Awake, my heart! I may not wait!

Let me arise and open the gate,
To breathe the wild warm air of the heath,
And to let in Love, and to let out Hate,
And anger at living, and scorn of Fate,
To let in Life, and to let out Death,
(For mine ears are deaf to the passing-bell—
I think he is buried now, out of the way;)
And I say to myself, 'It is good, it is well;
Squirrels that sport and doves that coo,
And leaves that twinkle against the blue,
And green woodpecker and screeching jay,—
Good-morrow, all! I am one of you!'
Since now I need neither muse nor read,
I may listen, and loiter, and live instead;
And take my pleasure in love and play,
And share my pastime with all things gay,
By the side of the ruined terrace,
In the breath of the early spring.

AUTUMN SONGS.

1889.

VIOLET FANE.

I.—THE LAMENT OF A WHITE ROSE.

I GREW beside a garden seat,
Where happy children laugh'd and play'd,
And tender lovers—dreaming—stray'd,
Whilst all my budding breast was sweet;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose!)

Anon, the children's mirth was o'er,
The tender lovers clung and wept;
Within the house a mother slept
Her last long sleep, to wake no more;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose!)

They came and cull'd a funeral wreath,
They pluck'd the white, they spared the red,
They flung me on a straiten'd bed,
On her cold breast who lay in death.
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose!)

They mourn'd and sigh'd in bow'r and hall,
The children cried, the lovers clung;
A great bell tolled with solemn tongue,
The coffin-lid leant by the wall;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose!)

They lifted up the coffin-lid,
Strange footsteps echoed on the stair,
Her children came to see her there,
And kiss her ere her face was hid;
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose!)

They wept in hall, they wept in bow'r
Their tears fell o'er me as they kissed her,
But the red rose weeps for her own pale sister
Buried alive 'neath the grey church tow'r.
(Oh, why was I only a poor white rose!)

II.—SONG.

"Dark tree! still sad when others' grief is fled,—
The only constant mourner o'er the dead!"

BYRON.

I WONDER,—will you twine for me
Sad cypress wreaths when I am dead,
Or, sentinel,—like yon dark tree,
Watch, constant, o'er my lonely bed?

Or will you,—like some forest bird
Escaped the slumb'ring fowler's snare,
Plume your free'd wings, and heavenward
Soar blithely thro' the ambient air? . .

Methinks at both my heart would bleed,—
My spirit-heart, 'neath folded wings,—
If our poor sexless souls shall heed
The passing of terrestrial things!

So, choose, my love, some middle way;—
At morn,—like falcon fresh and free
Soar sunwards,—but, at closing day
Be, sometimes, like the cypress tree;—

Mute o'er a memory remain
In centred thought, one little minute,—
Unclasp one closed-up book again
And read the story written in it!

Emily H. Hickey.

1845.

Emily Henrietta Hickey was born at Macmine Castle, near Enniscorthy, co. Wexford, Ireland, on the 12th of April, 1845. Her first published poem —"Told in the Firelight"—appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1866; and was followed by others contributed to various magazines, and afterward collected into volumes, bearing titles as follows:— "A Sculptor and Other Poems" (1881), "Verse Tales, Lyrics and Translations" (1889), "Michael Villiers, Idealist, and Other Poems" (1891). In 1881 Miss Hickey co-operated with Dr. Furnivall in founding the Browning Society, of which she was for some time the honorary secretary. An edition of Browning's *Strafford* with annotations by her, appeared in 1884. Her later works are "Poems" (1896); "Ancilla Domini"—privately published—(1898); "Our Lady of May, and Other Poems" (1902), and "Havelok the Dane" (1902).

Miss Hickey's poems embrace many varieties of form and theme, from lyrics of love and nature to ballads of modern life and blank verse discussions of politico-economic and socialistic questions. That she sings often for song's sake is proved by many a spontaneous lyric, but that she is often deeply stirred by an earnest underlying purpose is clear in her longer and more important poems. There is with her no blind acceptance of traditionary bonds

either in religious, social, or political thought, and she claims her right, and shows her ability to discuss without prejudice fundamental questions too often accepted as settled. Of spontaneous lyrics the following "Love-song" may serve as an example:—

"I know not whether to laugh or cry,
So greatly, utterly glad am I:
For one, whose beautiful love-lit face
The distance hid for a weary space,
Has come this day of all days to me
Who am his home and his own country.

What shall I say who am here at rest,
Led from the good things up to the best?
Little my knowledge, but this I know,
It was God said 'Love each other so.'
O love, my love, who hast come to me,
Thy love, thy home, and thy own country."

Such poems as "Her Dream," however, represent Miss Hickey at her best in lyric measures, while "A Sea Story" shows concentrated strength and no little dramatic power. Of her ballads, "Paddy" is one of the best, though they all maintain a fairly even level of merit. "For Richer, for Poorer" may represent her work in sonnet form:—

"'Oh, give us of your oil, our lamps go out:
Your well-fed lamps are clear and bright to see;
And, if we go to buy us oil, maybe,
Far off our ears shall hear the jubilant shout,
"Behold the Bridegroom cometh, zoned about
With utter light and utter harmony."
Then leave us not to weep continually
In darkness, for our souls' hunger and drought.'
Then turned one virgin of the virgins wise
To one among the foolish, with a low
Sweet cry, and looked her, lovelike, in the eyes,
Saying, 'My oil is thine; for weal, for woe,
We two are one, and where thou goest I go:
One lot being ours for aye, where'er it lies.'"

Miss Hickey's next work, "Michael Villiers, Idealist," was a much more ambitious effort. The taste for what is brief and essentially slight in poetry, so that it be fresh and graceful and delicately finished, leads one to fear for a poem of some ninety-four pages, in which the sterner tragedies of social life, and the deeper aspirations stirred by them in natures instinct with the passion and pity of justice, find fervent expression; and where even such questions as the rights and wrongs of Ireland, the wages of matchbox-makers, and the ownership of the soil, are touched with courage and frankness. But, at least, "Michael Villiers" gives no support to those who excuse their preference for mere art and grace over thought and aim, by hinting that in poetry these are incompatible with each other. Nor is the work marred by the one-sided zeal which is so often unloving and unjust even in its very demanding of love and justice. Miss Hickey is not merely an enthusiast or reformer; she is a Christian poet, penetrated with a poet's reverence for all that is fair in the past, and having a poet's insight into varying human types and human standpoints and difficulties. Her ideal leader is a strong figure, drawn by a strong hand, and best described in her own language:—

(VI.)

"The Man we need this nineteenth century
Is no enthusiast of the hollow jaws,
And fever-lighted eyes, and hectic flush
On the spare cheek, and slender blue-veined hands
The morbid soul beats through; not such as this
No mediæval mystic, drained of blood,
And stript of flesh; all natural desires
Dazed in *hysterica passio;* he being fain

Annihilate the flesh and leave the soul
Calm in her freedom ; cutting off his wings
To fly unhindered. Nay, O world of ours,
Not such as this must thy redeemer be!
Nor yet the man who sayeth in his heart,
There is no God, nor any need of Him :
Nor even he who knows the basal needs
Of body, soul, and spirit, and denies
No part of man : for more than this we cry!
Not even the stronger than the strong for us ;
We need the Christ in man ; not one strong man,
But a developed manhood ; we must fight
And bear, before we get Him ;—but, some day,
If so we grudge not freedom's heavy price,
Our loins shall teem with freeborn citizens,
Having the Christhood's glory on their heads.

* * * * *

Now God bless all true workers, let us pray :
The night-time cometh when we all must rest :
Strive we, and do, lest by-and-by we sit
In that blind life to which all other fate
Is cause for envy ; with the naked souls
Who never lived, knowing nor praise nor blame,
But kept themselves in mean neutrality,
Hateful alike to God and to His foes."

Full of inspiration for other idealists of to-day are her pictures of Michael and of the fair woman of his love, who "went among a set of working girls, rough, rude, unchaste in word if not in deed, and was a very light of joy to them in all the lovely rondure of her life and royal dower of inward happiness." But not even these are drawn with more strength and tenderness than the kindly, genial, old baronet, who has found nothing wanting in the good old-world commonplaces about rich and poor; and, after the manner of his sires, has drawn gold in plenty from his Irish lands, and spent it all at St. George's other side. Always the realism is

of that nobler kind, which is the strength, not the weakness, of both art and life; the thought is as broad and kindly as it is high; and even the college friend, who brings the cool sophisms of pseudo-political economy to front the quick passion of Michael's sympathy for the weak, finds a place almost as cordial in the reader's liking as in that of the idealist himself. Very tender is the picture of the fair Irish girl and the vision which came to her: a vision of that perfected love of humanity, to which, at all cost of pain or strife to him, she would consecrate her unborn child:—

(I.)

"But when at night upon her bed she lay,
That heart of hers was full of a strange light
Caught from the shining wings of motherhood
Which brooded warm and fair upon her life.
And happy thoughts went softly floating on,
Each with each blended, dear as undefined,
Breathing out scent, and light, and melody,
In one sweet fusion, till her heart was fain
To ease itself with tears. So the night wore,
With no unquiet counting of the hours;
And just before the dawn there came to her
A sudden dreadful poignancy of joy,
Piercing her soul like pain; and she cried out,
Her seemed, but John awaking heard as though
She laughed a little joyous laugh; and rose
To look upon her lovely face that lay
Sweet in the rippling sunshine of a smile,
In the grey quiet of the faded night;
Then kissed her with his eyes, because his mouth
Might break the slumber that she needed much,
And laid him down again saying, 'she dreams
Sleep on, beloved, and wake to sweeter things
Than sweetest dreams can bring you!' And he slept,
Unwitting of the vision Mary saw."

The story of Michael's birth, of his mother's and

his father's death, of his adoption by his uncle, and of the travail of soul in which he sought for the clearer vision, of his love for "Burd Lucy," and his devotion to the cause of human brotherhood, is told with both power and beauty, and the whole fitly closes with the following lines:—

(XIV.)

"Burd Lucy, who have put your hand in mine,
And laid that head of yours upon my breast;
Burd Lucy, who have crowned me on the brows
With a fair crown which once I feared to wear;
We stand together, my beloved, we two,
And front the future with unfearing eyes.
We have not solved the mystery of our world,
But yet have seen the heaving of its breast
With the great love which throbs for aye beneath:
And we trust God and man, and we go on
To live out what we think to be the truth.
We who believe in man, ay, and in men;
We who would work as if upon our work
Hung the supremest issue; and would wait
As if our patience had the key of heaven.
We who have clasped this faith unto our hearts,
God never wastes, but only spends; although
Man's eyes unpurged discern not use from waste.
And, for the day which we believe will be,
We love and work for that; and go in faith
That He who comes will come, whate'er the time."

To say that with all its earnestness of purpose, its frequent beauty of thought, and its many felicities of expression, its artistic success is not complete, is to say what has been said of all attempts to treat the problems of modern life in the form of "novels in verse," from "Aurora Leigh" downwards. Among such works, however, it takes a high place, and it can hardly be that literature and humanity are not the better for its publication.

ALFRED H. MILES.

LYRICS AND VERSE TALES.

EMILY H. HICKEY.

I.—BELOVED, IT IS MORN.

BELOVED, it is morn!
A redder berry on the thorn,
A deeper yellow on the corn,
For this good day new-born.
Pray, Sweet, for me
That I may be
Faithful to God and thee.

Beloved, it is day!
And lovers work, as children play,
With heart and brain untir'd alway:
Dear love, look up and pray.
Pray, Sweet, for me
That I may be
Faithful to God and thee.

Beloved, it is night!
Thy heart and mine are full of light,
Thy spirit shineth clear and white,
God keep thee in His sight!
Pray, Sweet, for me
That I may be
Faithful to God and thee.

II.—"THANK YOU."

"Comme vous êtes bon . . ."
"Non, je t'aime,
Voilà tout."

VICTOR HUGO.

WHY do you thank me, dear;
Say I am kind?
Sometimes, alas, I fear
You must be blind.

Say, does the sun give thanks
To the flowers that lift
Glad faces on hedgerow banks
In the light, his gift?

Are thanks for your right hand meet
When it serves your need?
Do you ever bless your feet
Because of their speed?

Do you thank your eyes that see,
Or your ears that hear?
Then why give thanks to me,
My dear, my dear?

Do you know that you, yes, you
Are light to mine eyes?
I love you, love you true—
How otherwise?

You let me into your heart,
Do you not know?
You made me of life a part
A while ago.

What matters what I may do,
Or what I may give?
You know I would die for you,
As for you I live.

Then let me breathe with your breath,
To your need respond,
Till we come to the gates of death
And the strange beyond.

III.—"M." TO "N."

HOW sweet are you to me? As sweet
As dewy turf to wayworn feet;
As cooling draught of water given
To lips athirst from morn to even;
As bread and wine at Sacrament
To soul of blessed penitent.

How true are you to me? As true
As swallow to the roadless blue,
When spring hath wakened in his breast
Life's rapture of the brooding west:
Or as the sea in his response
To that still call which is the moon's.

How near are you to me? As near
As to the earth her atmosphere;
As warp to woof where web is wove;
As strength to hope; as light to love;
As my own blood, my flesh, my breath;
As near as life, as near as death.

How far are you from me? As far
As glory of the morning-star
From Lucifer; as far as bliss
Of comradeship from Judas' kiss;
As day from night: indeed, more far
From me than heaven from hell you are.

IV.—HER DREAM.

FOLD your arms around me, Sweet,
As against your heart my heart doth beat.

Kiss me, Love, till it fade, the fright
Of the dreadful dream I dreamt last night.

Oh, thank God, it is you, it is you,
My own love, fair and strong and true.

We two are the same that, yesterday,
Played in the light and tost the hay.

My hair you stroke, O dearest one,
Is alive with youth and bright with the sun.

Tell me again, Love, how I seem
'The prettiest queen of curds and cream.'

Fold me close and kiss me again;
Kiss off the shadow of last night's pain.

I dreamt last night, as I lay in bed,
That I was old and that you were dead.

I knew you had died long time ago,
And I well recalled the moan and woe.

You had died in your beautiful youth, my sweet;
You had gone to rest with untired feet;

And I had prayed to come to you,
To lay me down and slumber too.

But it might not be, and the days went on,
And I was all alone, alone.

The women came so neighbourly,
And kissed my face and wept with me;

And the men stood still to see me pass,
And smiled grave smiles, and said, '*Poor lass!*'

Sometimes I seemed to hear your feet,
And my grief-numbed heart would wildly beat;
And I stopt and named my darling's name—
But never a word of answer came.

The men and women ceased at last
To pity pain that was of the past;
For pain is common, and grief, and loss;
And many come home by Weeping Cross

Why do I tell you this, my dear?
Sorrow is gone now you are here.
You and I we sit in the light,
And fled is the horror of yesternight.

The time went on, and I saw one day
My body was bent and my hair was grey.
But the boys and girls a-whispering
Sweet tales in the sweet light of the spring,

Never paused in the tales they told
To say, '*He is dead and she is old.*'
There's a place in the churchyard where, I thought,
Long since my lover had been brought:
It had sunk with years from a high green mound
To a level no stranger would have found:

But I, I always knew the spot;
How could I miss it, know it not?
Darling, darling, draw me near,
For I cannot shake off the dread and fear.
Hold me so close I scarce can breathe;
And kiss me, for, lo, above, beneath,

The blue sky fades, and the green grass dries,
And the sunshine goes from my lips and eyes.
O God—that dream—it has not fled—
One of us old, and one of us dead!

V.—A SEA STORY.

SILENCE. A while ago
Shrieks went up piercingly;
But now is the ship gone down;
Good ship, well manned, was she.
There's a raft that's a chance of life for one,
This day upon the sea.

A chance for one of two;
Young, strong, are he and he,
Just in the manhood prime,
The comelier, verily,
For the wrestle with wind and weather and wave
In the life upon the sea.

One of them has a wife
And little children three;
Two that can toddle and lisp;
And a suckling on the knee;
Naked they'll go and hunger sore,
If he be lost at sea.

One has a dream of home,
A dream that well may be;
He never has breathed it yet;
She never has known it, she.
But some one will be sick at heart,
If he be lost at sea.

"Wife and kids and home!—
Wife, kids nor home has he!—
Give us a chance, Bill!" Then,
"All right, Jem!" Quietly
A man gives up his life for a man,
This day upon the sea.

Louisa S. Guggenberger.

1845.

Mrs. Guggenberger, better known to the public by her maiden name, Louisa Sarah Bevington, was born in the year 1845. Her father, Alexander Bevington, was of Quaker family, an ancestor of his, when but a boy of fourteen, suffering confinement in Nottingham Gaol with George Fox. Mrs. Guggenberger is the eldest of a family of eight, seven of whom were girls. Her father encouraged her in the observation and love of nature, and at a very early age she wrote childish verses about natural objects. It was not, however, until childhood had been left behind that she made use of verse for the expression of her own thought, though she is said to have had a love for science, poetry, music, and metaphysical thinking even in pinafore days. Her first published verses were three sonnets which appeared in the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner* in 1871, about which time she began writing prose essays on speculative subjects, ethical and metaphysical. The evolutionist view of the universe grew upon her, appealing to her intellect, and firing her imagination, as well as securing the enthusiastic assent of her æsthetic sense and moral being. This found expression in her verse. Encouraged by trusted literary advisers, Miss Bevington made up her mind to follow a literary career, wrote some philosophical essays,

and in 1876 printed some of her poems for private circulation. Mr. Herbert Spencer caused four of these poems—"Morning," "Afternoon," "Twilight," and "Midnight"—to be reprinted in the *Popular Science Monthly* in America under the title "Teachings of a Day." In 1879 all the poems privately printed were reprinted, together with others, in a volume called "Keynotes," which found fame chiefly in scientific circles. Professor Ray Lankester brought it under the notice of Darwin, who read it after not having opened a volume of verse for fifteen years. Two articles written for the *Nineteenth Century* this same year (1879), refuting from a scientific standpoint the cynical pessimism of Mallock's "Is Life Worth Living?" procured the writer some literary recognition and many literary friends both in England and America. Two essays followed respectively on "Determinism and Duty" and "The Personal Aspects of Responsibility" which appeared in *Mind* (the Psychological Quarterly); and in 1881, at the suggestion of Mr. Herbert Spencer, an article in the *Fortnightly* in defence of evolutionist morality. In 1882 Miss Bevington's second volume of verse appeared under the title "Poems, Lyrics, and Sonnets," a volume which found less favour in scientific, and more favour in literary, circles. Shortly after the publication of this volume she visited Germany, and in 1883 married Ignatz Guggenberger, a Munich artist. After her marriage Mrs. Guggenberger contributed occasional articles on different subjects to various magazines, and in 1891 the evolution chapter to the Ethical Society's enlarged edition of the "Religious Systems of the World." Mrs. Guggenberger resided for some time at Meran, afterwards removing to

London. She has for years been an enthusiastic "anarchist," and has shown high hope and deep devotion in the cause.

It is not surprising that Mrs. Guggenberger should have broken the spell which for fifteen years had confined Darwin to the world of prose, for her part is emphatically that of the poetess of evolutionary science. She has discerned more accurately than many contemporaries, the immense poetical development which the acceptance of the evolutionary view has made possible for science, and her best poems are attempts, by no means feeble or unskilful, to bring out the poetic significance of scientific principles. She has also abundance of human feeling and passion, which find expression in poems having other than a scientific basis, and though the structure of her verse is artless, her diction is clear and vigorous. The following "Summer Song" may serve to illustrate her free lyrical movement :—

"Sing! sing me a song that is fit for to-day,
Sing me a song of the sunshine, a warm sweet lay,
Blue larkspur, and bold white daisies, and odour of hay.

Breathe: breathe into music a summer-day tune,
Learnt of the bloom-heavy breezes and honey of noon,
Full of the scent, and the glow, and the passion of June.

You shall sit in the shadow to learn it, just under the trees;
You shall let the wind fan you and kiss you, and hark to the bees,
You shall live in the love-laden present, and dream at your ease.

And skylarks shall trill all in concert up, up in the blue,
And the bee and the lazy-winged butterfly dance to it too,
While you sing me a song of the summer that's ancient and new."

Mrs. Guggenberger has also attempted the stricter forms of verse, the *villanelle* and the *sonnet*, of which latter form we may quote the following, which is entitled "Love's Depth":—

"Love's height is easy scaling; skies allure;
Who feels the day-warmth needs must find it fair;
Strong eagles ride the lofty sunlit air,
Risking no rivals while their wings endure.
Yet is thy noblest still thy least secure,
And failing thee—shall then thy love despair?
Shall not thy heart more holily prepare
Some depth unfathomable,—perfect-pure?
Say that to thee there come love's dreadful call
The downward swiftness of thy Best to see;
Say that he sin or sicken, what of thee?
Are thine arms deeper yet to stay his fall?
Scarcely love's utmost may in heaven be;
To hell it reacheth so 'tis love at all."

Her chief defects are the over-facility common to so many poetesses, and a deficient perception of the humorous. Of the qualities of her best work the following examples bear witness.

ALFRED H. MILES.

KEY NOTES.

1879.

LOUISA S. GUGGENBERGER.

I.—MORNING.

WHAT'S the text to-day for reading
Nature and its being by?
There is effort all the morning
Thro' the windy sea and sky.

All, intent in earnest grapple
That the All may let it be:
Force, in unity, at variance
With its own diversity.

Force, prevailing into action,
Force, persistent to restrain,
In a twofold, one-souled wrestle
Forging Being's freedom-chain.

Frolic! say you—when the billow
Tosses back a mane of spray?
No; but haste of earnest effort;
Nature works in guise of play.

Till the balance shall be even
Swings the to and fro of strife;
Till an awful equilibrium
Stills it, beats the Heart of Life.

What's the text to-day for reading
Nature and its being by?
Effort, effort all the morning,
Thro' the sea and windy sky.

II.—AFTERNOON.

PURPLE headland over yonder,
Fleecy, sun-extinguished moon,
I am here alone, and ponder
On the theme of Afternoon.

Past has made a groove for Present,
And what fits it *is*: no more.
Waves before the wind are weighty;
Strongest sea-beats shape the shore.

Just what is is just what can be,
And the Possible is free;
'Tis by being, not by effort,
That the firm cliff juts to sea.

With an uncontentious calmness
Drifts the Fact before the "Law";
So we name the ordered sequence
We, remembering, foresaw.

And a law is mere procession
Of the forcible and fit;
Calm of uncontested Being,
And our thought that comes of it

In the mellow shining daylight
Lies the Afternoon at ease,
Little willing ripples answer
To a drift of casual breeze.

Purple headland to the westward!
Ebbing tide, and fleecy moon!
In the "line of least resistance,"
Flows the life of Afternoon

III.—TWILIGHT.

GREY the sky, and growing dimmer,
And the twilight lulls the sea;
Half in vagueness, half in glimmer,
Nature shrouds her mystery.

What have all the hours been spent for?
Why the on and on of things?
Why eternity's procession
Of the days and evenings?

Hours of sunshine, hours of gleaming,
Wing their unexplaining flight,
With a measured punctuation
Of unconsciousness, at night.

Just at sunset, was translucence,
When the west was all aflame;
So I asked the sea a question,
And an answer nearly came.

Is there nothing but Occurrence?
Though each detail seem an Act,
Is that whole we deem so pregnant
But unemphasized Fact?

Or, when dusk is in the hollows
Of the hill-side and the wave,
Are things just so much in earnest
That they cannot but be grave?

Nay, the lesson of the Twilight
Is as simple as 'tis deep;
Acquiescence, acquiescence,
And the coming on of sleep.

IV.—MIDNIGHT.

THERE are sea and sky about me,
And yet nothing sense can mark;
For a mist fills all the midnight
Adding blindness to its dark.

There is not the faintest echo
From the life of yesterday:
Not the vaguest stir foretelling
Of a morrow on the way.

'Tis negation's hour of triumph
In the absence of the sun;
'Tis the hour of endings, ended,
Of beginnings, unbegun.

Yet the voice of awful silence
Bids my waiting spirit hark;
There is action in the stillness,
There is progress in the dark.

In the drift of things and forces
Comes the better from the worse,
Swings the whole of Nature upward,
Wakes, and thinks—a universe.

There will be *more* life to-morrow,
And of life, more life that *knows*;
Though the sum of force be constant
Yet the Living ever grows.

So we sing of evolution,
And step strongly on our ways;
And we live through nights in patience,
And we learn the worth of days.

In the silence of murk midnight
Is revealed to me this thing:
Nothing hinders, all enables
Nature's vast awakening.

V.—UNFULFILLED.

ERE yet the sunlight caught it where it lay,
I saw a snow-flake vanish utterly;
I saw a blossom perish on the spray,
Ere yet its petals opened to the bee:
I heard a yearning dissonance to-day
Fail, ere it found its final harmony.

These, symbols: yet—O saddest, and O best
Of Nature's unfulfilments!—one hath passed
Unscarred by any heart-strife to her rest
Who, scarcely fed, gave thanks for life's repast,
And ere love's first full throb had stirred her breast
Praised God for love, and smiling, smiled her last.

Well! well! such vanishings are breathings stilled
Ere yet they grew intense, and turned to sighs;
We curse the stern world-providence that willed
The light away from waking baby-eyes;
We sing the dirges of the Unfulfilled,
We suffer; not the innocence that dies.

It dies at our, and not its own expense,
We loved it, for it was exceeding white;
Who knows?—strong draughts of utmost sentience
Had left it, fevered, in a lurid night!
Better a thousandfold that, lost to sense,
It lingers yet—the memory of a Light.

1882.

LOUISA S. GUGGENBERGER.

I.—BEES IN CLOVER.

A Song.

UP the dewy slopes of morning
Follow me;
Every smoky spy-glass scorning,
Look and see, look and see
How the simple sun is rising,
Not approving nor despising
You and me.
Hear not those who bid you wait
Till they find the sun's birth-date,
Preaching children, savage sages,
To their mouldy, blood-stuck pages
And the quarrelling of ages,
Leave them all; and come and see
Just the little honied clover,
As the winging music-bees
Come in busy twos and threes
Humming over!
All without a theory
Quite successfully, you see;
Little priests that wed the flowers,
Little preachers in their way,
Through the sunny working day
With their quite unconscious powers
How they say their simple say.

What? a church-bell in the valley?
What? a wife-shriek in the alley?
Tune the bell a little better,
Help the woman bear her fetter.

All in time! all in time!
If you will but take your fill
Of the dawn-light on the hill,
And behold the dew-gems glisten, —
If you turn your soul to listen
To the bees among the thyme,
There may chance a notion to you
To encourage and renew you,
For the doing and the speaking,
Ere the jarring of the chime,
And the mad despair of shrieking
Call you downward to the mending
Of a folly, and the ending
Of a crime.

On the dewy hill at morning
Do you ask?—do you ask?
How to tune the bells that jangle?
How to still the hearts that wrangle?—
For a task?
When the bell shall suit the ears
Of the strong man's hopes and fears,
As the bee-wing suits the clover
And the clover suits the bee,
Then the din shall all be over,
And the woman shall be free,
And the bell ring melody,
Do you see?—do you see?
There are bees upon the hill,
And the sun is climbing still,
To his noon;
Shall it not be pretty soon
That the wife she shall be well,
And the jarring of the bell
Falls in tune?

II.—THE VALLEY OF REMORSE.

THERE goes a wandering soul in desert places;
(Good Lord, deliver!)

About its way, lie dumb, with livid faces,
Slain virtues and slain hopes in locked embraces;
(Good Lord, deliver!)

And drear black crags tower from unholy ground
Sheer upward in thick air,
Where breathes no prayer;
No wind is there,
No sound;
(Good Lord, deliver!)

And there is no way out, and round and round,
With haggard eye and dragged and staggering paces,
Through years that soul a ghastly circuit traces.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

The sun, all shorn of rays, with lurid fire
Blasts where it strikes: Doom's own red eye of ire:
And all night long is seen unhallowed shimmer,—
Half life, half mire,—
Of things made manifest that should be hid;
Yet Will is numb that should their play forbid;
And so they crowd and crawl in gloom and glimmer,
Loathed and unchid;
And lo! that soul among them, moving dimmer.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

At the soul's back behold a burden yonder,
A monstrous thing of slime;
Two paces forth,—no more,—that Doomed may wander
For all its time;—

Two wretched paces from the accursed weight
Bound on by linkèd fate
In glittering cynic chain two steps behind it;
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Such steely bond between
Forbids it breath, save only to remind it
The Past has been,
The Past of sin.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Ay! just where life is holiest—at the source
Of the soft, ruffled wings,—is chained the curse.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Those pinions, once all light and wide of feather
That soared right loftily, see, clamped together;
And quivering life is gallèd at the spot,
Sore hurt and hot:
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Yet, chafes that soul rebellious at the tether?
Or, in vain swiftness seeks to flee the load?
Then heavier fall the blood-drops on the road:—
(Good Lord, deliver!)

The loathèd burden of unburied death
Flies fast as flies that Doomed, or drags as slow;
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Two paces forward ever may it go;
No more; the burden grimly followeth.
There is no freedom here,
Nor any cheer!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Not lightened yet to skeleton, nor dried,
The load yields horror, horror yet beside;

Fell fumes, half poison and half sustenance,
That hinder life, and hinder deathly trance.
Is there a chance?

(Good Lord, deliver!)

* * * * *

Three virgin forms came passing by but lately,
Treading the desert boldly and sedately,
Calling it 'beauteous earth,'
Who met this Doomed, and gazed upon it straightly;

(Good Lord, deliver!)

These saw no burden, so they praised the chain;
Its treacherous glitter seemed some bauble worn
About the wingèd shoulders to adorn.

(Good Lord, deliver!)

They noted on the path no shocking stain,
So, as the soul made moan,
Knowing no whit of conflict nor of pain,
Deemed it most vain,
And answered in gay tone—

"Now Heaven deliver thee,
Spirit alone!—
Why grievest thou when every bird is singing,
And glad white cloudlets high in ether winging
Brighten e'en sunshine? Hear the steeples ringing
With marriage mirth!
Behold life blest with love and holiday
While thou art stricken, bent, and wan to see;

Good Lord, deliver thee!"

All mutely points that soul beyond the chain
Two paces backward; points in vain, in vain;—
Who sees not, cannot aid.

Oh, kind, unkindly virgin sympathy!
Oh, blind, hell-deepening, heavenly mockery!
What though each maid
Had pitied had she seen; not one could see,
Not one of three.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

They passed, and music with them. Then there came
Three little children, joying e'en the same,
Yet sweetlier still. They called the desert "May."
(Good Lord, deliver!)

"Come play with us at play;
Blue skies and meadows green are friends to-day;
Spread thy good wings, that we may mount thereon
And seek of all the clouds the whitest one
To tiptoe on its top toward the sun;
And prove whose sight is strongest!
And who can gaze the longest!
Our little eyes are clear,—
Young, but so clear!
In each of thine there trembles half a tear!
Ah! fun!—
We see where thou canst see not; in the eye
Of the great golden sun that crowns the sky!"
(Good Lord, deliver!)

A mother and a father wandered by:
Hand locked in hand.—"This way the children went,"
Quoth he, "on some enchanting mischief bent;
Behold, their little footprints thickly lie."
"Bless them!" quoth she: then closer to his side
Drew shudderingly: "An influence is here,
Here in the air; the sunlight seemeth drear;
Oh, lead me hence!" and he:
"'Tis so; I see a form unmeet to see

Advancing painfully.
Oh, fear!
Lest the sweet babies lingered near the spot,
For something foul doth surely somewhere rot;
It boots not to know what.
Hence! spirit dear."
(Good Lord, deliver!)

* * * * *

Maiden and babe and mother have passed by
Scatheless, yet left the doom-glare red and high
Above the blackened valley of all dole,
Nor freed the laden soul.
Crawl, ye foul formless ills! about your prey;
Sink, O thrice lost! forsaken on the way;
Perish from day!
Since thrice hath passed in vain the innocent,
And hope is long, long spent,
And will is rent.
(Good Lord! Great God! deliver! deliver!)

Lo! Love comes wandering on the desert way.
Oh, watch! oh, pray!
Love with the rose-wreath red?
Ay, love rose-bound!
Ay, love thorn-crowned!
Crowned—bound—with cruel rose-thorns round his head!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Love! love is here! that knoweth of all pain,
And of the linkèd chain,
And of the stain,
And of the whirling madness, dumb and dread;
Love! love is here that knoweth nought in vain!

Dead hope, dead will, oh! cry
Aloud! Love passeth by;
Love, that can love dead life to live again!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

New radiance hallows all the sickened air;
For love is here.
And right and left spring lilies at his nod,
Blessing the blighted sod,
For love is here.
And round the gaunt crags echo of deep prayer
Is sighing everywhere,—
Is sighing everywhere!
For love is here.
(Deliver! Lord, deliver!)

Kneels that worn soul, for all the place is holy;
Breaks that sore heart, in utterance lost and lowly;
"For Love's dear sake, great Powers, deliver me!
O Love, deliver me!"

* * * * *

A little bird sweet twitters in a tree;
A little breeze comes coolly from the sea;
And broad the dawn-light widens o'er the lea.

III.—AT SABBATH DAWN.

SIX times the sun has hotly lit
A smoke-wreathed scene of care,
To-day the dust of toil is laid,
And children are at prayer.

Six times has tempest swept my soul,
And now I gladly spend
A time of quietness with you,
My patient, faithful friend.

There have been noons of warmer blaze,
And midnights meteor-lit—
But never this most placed heaven,
With heart-peace under it.

There have been throbs of stronger bliss,
Yet is your presence best;
Safe in your firm and quiet hand
My hasty pulses rest.

For fiercely tides of life have flowed
And ebbed, alas! too fast,
Breathless and spent, I cast me down
On tideless shores at last.

I do not ask if this be love,
I know it to be rest;
The sabbath of my life has dawned,
And I am very blest.

IV.—AM I TO LOSE YOU?

"AM I to lose you now?" The words were light;
You spoke them, hardly seeking a reply,
That day I bid you quietly "Good-bye,"
And sought to hide my soul away from sight.
The question echoed, dear, through many a night,—
My question, not your own—most wistfully;
"Am I to lose him?"—asked my heart of me;
"Am I to lose him now, and lose him quite?"

And only you can tell me. Do you care
That sometimes we in quietness should stand
As fellow-solitudes, hand firm in hand,
And thought with thought and hope with hope compare?
What is your answer? Mine must ever be,
"I greatly need your friendship: leave it me."

C. C. Fraser Tytler.

(*Mrs. Edward Liddell.*)

1848.

Mrs. Edward Liddell, perhaps better known as C. C. Fraser Tytler, published in 1881 a small volume of poems entitled "Songs in Minor Keys." This volume soon reached a second edition, and we might almost have expected, as we could certainly have hoped, that the reception of the first might have encouraged the issue of a second volume, but it has not been so, and at the time of this writing the "Songs in Minor Keys" remains Mrs. Liddell's one published volume of poetic work.

The qualities of this volume are well illustrated by the poems given in the following pages:— "Absolution" is a sweet story of English lovers parted by circumstances, yet cherishing the old love, and meeting again after years of separation at the confessional where the woman confesses the wrong she does her husband and children by cherishing the memory of the old, far, happy time. The story, which is simple in its construction, is told with a pathos and beauty which makes even its sadness sweet, and irresistibly enkindles the sympathy of the reader for those whom love unites but fate divides. The passage in which the unconscious penitent, "all unknowing yet all known,"

concludes her confession rises to a high point of dramatic interest and power:—

"Stay! there is one strain more. If I should see
His face again—on this side of the grave,
My God! and if he called me, 'Will you come?'
I sometimes think I should not choose but go!
Pray for me, Father—I have told you all.
But God is gracious—do not you be hard—
But answer, Father, and then shrive me so!"

"The Highland Glen" is another pathetic story, told in dialect by an old Scotch wife, who cheers herself amid the smoky surroundings of an old Scotch town by thoughts of the Highland Glen in which she spent her happy youth.

"But for the bonny glen my heart cries sair,
I dream I'm standing knee-deep in the burn;
I see the rowans noddin' over head,
I hear the mavis sing aboon the fern."

"Naomi" touches another phase of home sorrow, and with the same true and tender hand, a hand gifted with the "touch of Nature" which never fails to find the key-note of human interest, and finds it, by reason of its greater sensitiveness, oftenest in the minor scale. And yet, as Mr. Hall Caine has remarked, "although the atmosphere of the book is distinctly an atmosphere of sadness," it is "not of sadness prolonged until it becomes painful, but brightened by hope, and losing nothing of its natural effect from an undue dwelling on the night side of nature. The devotional pieces have sometimes a power that recall Christina Rossetti ('Thou too hast Suffered' is a beautiful exposition of ascetic passion), while the descriptive passages have an autumnal sweetness that reminds us occasionally of Mrs. Webster."

ALFRED H. MILES.

SONGS IN MINOR KEYS.

1884.

C. C. FRASER TYTLER.

(Mrs. Edward Liddell.)

I.—ABSOLUTION.

TWO loved a few years since, and read anew
The mysteries of God; and earth and sky
Were but reflections of a great I AM,
Whose name was Love: for Love is God, they said,
And thought it were the same as God is Love.

So they smiled on in a large land of smiles,
Where, as of old, the blind man with half-sight
Saw men as trees before him: and their feet
Went airily along on untouched earth,
And birds were angels, and to love was life.
And with the eyes of children that first see,
And know it, so they saw and wondered much
How they had ever lived so blind before.

And then the real awakening came—the day
When, children still, they learned to see beyond
The mazy borders of the land of Love;
Saw more than men as trees, and learnt to know
The harder after-lesson of "I feel."

All life not fair—all men not true; some hard,
And some as pitiless as hail from heaven.
And a gaunt figure called the World strode up,
And came between them, and the gods of earth
Lift up themselves and asked for human hearts,
And theirs were offered on the golden shrine.

They parted, as the old tales run; and none
But God and such as part can tell the woe
Of the long days that moaned themselves away
Like billows beating on a sandy shore,
Whose song is ever of long Death and Time—
For ever breaking their full hearts, and still
Upgathering all the weight of woe again
To break for ever. But billows that are tired
Sink down at last into a patient calm,
Seeing their breaking fruitless. And so she,
Wed to another, with the child she bore
Rocked her old sorrow into fitful sleep,
And prayed the Holy Mother bless the child
And keep him safe, heart-whole from love and grief.

So many years rolled by: when on a day
The sun of warmer countries beating strong
Upon the Roman's city, filled the dome
Of Peter as with fire from God. And there
Within, alone in that great solitude,
Keeping his watch for any lambs might seek
There to be shriven of their sins and set
Anew upon the highway of their God,
A priest, unseen, with his long wand outstretched.
Silence reigned speaking. And to his heart and God
The Father spake. When, lo, there swayed far off
The outer curtain, and there came the tread
Of swift light feet along the marble floor.
A woman, fair with beauty of full life;
Girlish in all her movements, yet with pain
Of Holy Mother by the Holy Rood
On the sweet face from which she cast the veil
And looked about her. But the beckoning wand
Called to her mutely—and she paused and knelt.

"Father, canst understand my English tongue?
Yea! then I thank my God, for I am sad,
And burthened so with sin, I cannot walk
With head erect among my fellow-men,
And I am stranger here, and would confess.

"Father, it was no sin; it seemed not so
When it was near me, in that time long past;
But good thoughts, held beyond their time, are sin,
And good thoughts asked of us by God may turn
To foul corruption if we hold them here.
Listen to me. A long, long time gone by
I loved. Start not. My love was free; no chain
Bound me to suffer. All the world was mine,
And over it there flushed the rosy light
Of a first love—God knows how true and pure
Father, a love that holy men like you
Need never shrink from. Such a love, as but
To taste the blessedness of loving so
Were heaven on earth. But then to hear and see
He loved me was a tale too great, too dear,
For mortal heart to bear alone, and beat.
And so God thought to make us one—for I
Had died, but that his heart could share with me
In part the joyfulness, the too-much bliss.

"Father, when just my weaker soul had grown
To lean its fulness on him—when the times
And seasons passed unseen, because that I
Felt only constant summer by my side—
Then—they came between us. Had he died
He still was mine hereafter. Christ Himself
Has His own bride, the Church. But I was wed,
And he passed from me to I know not where.

"Father, the years have passed. I thought that I
Had learnt so well the lesson—to forget.
But Memory listens, as a wakeful child,
And all the more the watcher bids him sleep,
He opens wide his eyes, and makes reply,
And will not sleep for bidding. It is so,
Father, with me. And in my children's eyes
I see reproaches; and their baby-hands
That wreathe me seem to say, 'You are not true,
Not a true mother, for your life is past:
You only love us somewhere in a dream.'

"Father, he lives—my husband. And his love
Speaks too reproaches. For when he can smile,
I cannot, as good wives should do, smile back,
And lie myself to gladness. I turn there,
My God! to those long days have burnt their brand
Into my heart. When I could live: before,—
O Father! that 'before!'—that great, great gulf
That yawns between us! Ah, I hear you start!
Did you speak, Father? I am vile, but now-
Shrive me—I dare not take my load away!

"Stay! there is one stain more. If I should see
His face again—on this side of the grave,
My God! and if he called me, 'Will you come?'
I sometimes think I could not choose but go!
Pray for me, Father—I have told you all.
But God is gracious—do not you be hard—
But answer, Father, and then shrive me so!"

There was a long, long silence as she knelt.
And then, at length, a voice as of the wind
Moaning a little in a wooded place,
Came to her softly.

"Daughter, be thou still
And patient. It is the great God's will.
I, too, have suffered: had a love like thine,
But long, long since have laid its fetters by.
Daughter, go home. It were not well to stay
Longer in this blest place—we two—alone.
I shrive thee so—from sin! Pray thou for me,
As I for thee. In heaven—hereafter—
Who knows?—I yet may speak with thee again!"

She moved, she rose, and passed forth from the place,
With heart made gladder. And the curtain fell,
As the soft footsteps on the marble died.

It was the silence only and his God
That heard a moan beyond the outstretched wand:
A long, long sigh, as of a spirit fled.
And then, in broken whispers, came at length:

"Into Thy hands, my God! the gate is past—
Death hath no longer sting, and Life hath nought
For me to fear or shrink from any more.
My God, I thank Thee! Thine the power, the might,
That held my breath, and made me more than man!
If I have suffered my full meed of pain,
Let me go hence! And on the other side
Show me Thy Bride! that I may fill my soul
And have no aching there—nor any part
In looking earthwards—back to earthly things!"

That night in Rome a heavy bell tolled slow
In convent walls. And cowlèd brothers prayed
For Brother Francis, entered into rest.

II.—THE HIGHLAND GLENS.

IN a dull cobwebbed street of a Scotch town
I knew a woman once—she died last year—
The poorest, humblest of God's creatures, she
Had the great secret, and was happy here.
Her birth was Highland. As a comely girl—
She often told the tale—her lad had come,
And out of the deep glen between the hills
Had brought her with him to his city home.
"I laid my head upon the kist," she'd say,
"When we was merried, and the time drew on
For me to say farewell to all my folk
To gae wi' him the strange new way alone.
"'Hout, tout,' said Jean, 'I niver seed the like,
I niver seed you take on so before;
Rise up, rise up, the goodman's waitin' you;
All these unclever ways 'll vex him sore!'
"'But still I cried upon the kist,' she'd say,
Till Jamie came and led me right awa'.
It's a dour pleasurin' is a wedding-day,
Wi' two strong loves a-pu'ing you in twa.
"The bonny glen, the wee wee burnie's face
I couldn't say farewell wi'out a tear;
The hills and a' the flowers were wide awake
On thon sweet mornin' o' the youngling year.
"Maybe I think on these a great deal more,
Now that the dear ones a' are gone to rest.
That day I moaned like dove about her brood,
As I lay sobbin' on my mither's breast.
"And oh for May and Angus—it was sair!
Angus he hung about the place so dull,
And May and me—we never spake at a'
That last long week, when hearts were at the full.

"Like some great roses kept agin a show
We durstn't touch our hearts lest they should break,
So each kept cheery in a cheerless way,
Tried to keep hearty for the other's sake.

"I span a plaid," she'd say, "in those old days,
When we were courtin', my dear lad and I,
I span it green for the dear glen and trees,
I span it blue for God Almighty's sky;

"I span a twist o' red to run a' through,
To show my heart's blood beating was for him—
You'll see the plaid upon the bed," she'd say,
"Although the bonnie colours are a' dim.

"He wore it till he died. He liked his plaid;
And he's been dead and gone these twenty years,
And ever since it's been upon my bed;
It's kept me warm, it's dried a many tears.

"How do I fare? Oh, I—I fare right weel.
I hae three pound a-year, and only me:
I niver had no bairns; and when he died,
My man, he greets awhile, and says, says he,

"'How'll you fare, love, all left, and all alone?'
I couldn't answer. But at last says I,
'My dear, the God 'as kept us both at once
'll keep me easy now you're goin' on high.'

"He's kept me all along. I've got no needs,
There's room enow in here for only me;
I has my three pounds regular: and I pays
Into the coal club. I've enow for tea;

"Only I need be very moderate. When I make
A cup o' tea, that's two, because I swill
The teapot out a second time, ye see;
Oh, and I fares right well; I gets my fill.

"No, I don't want for nothin', though you're kind;
My blankets they are thin—but there's the plaid;
I gets along right canty—gets to kirk
Now and again on warm days. When I'm sad,

"And that's not often, praise the Lord!—I go
Awhiley down the street; and at the end
You'll see a tree that's bonny and that's green,
And that poor wee bit town-tree is my friend.

"For in these days, when I'm grown grey and bent,
And a' my kith and kin are gone to God,
My mind keeps turnin' to the glen I left
Forty long years ago. As through a cloud

"The things of later days go daze my brain,
I'm no just clear about the how and when;
But every stick and stone and bit o' wall
And every cranny in the bonny glen

"Is plain afore me. I can think o' him,
My man, my sister May, and Angus too,
And o' my mither, wi'out e'er a tear—
I know God keeps them that are leal and true.

"But for the bonny glen my heart cries sair,
I dream I'm standin' knee-deep in the burn;
I see the rowans noddin' overhead,
I hear the mavis sing aboon the fern.

"And when I see the wee bit roomie here,
My man's auld Bible, and my father's crook,
And when I see the plaidie on the bed,
And see them a' through this poor city's smoke,

"I shut my een, and pray the Lord make haste,
Tak' me the shortest road to heaven's stair;
And 'gin the shortest road were by the glen,
Think you the Lord wad tak' me round by there?"

III.—THOU TOO HAST SUFFERED.

WHAT have I suffered that Thou hast not borne?
Comes the dear thought when I am spent with pain,
When the slow hours are passing, thought recalls
Thine agony again.

But when the spirit's pinion flags and fails,
Complaining sore I turn rebellious still,
As if Thou also hadst not been downcast
By Cedron's rill.

Bowed with the weight of some dark nameless loss,
Looking around on places death makes void,
Can I forget that Thou didst lose Thy friend,
That Lazarus died?

Yea, but, my Saviour, hear my keener grief,
I lose my friend in God, and say 'tis well;
But to know him, all-trusting, all-betrayed,
Is sorrow's hell!

To know a true love spurned—nay, worse, received
By shallow faithless heart, too false to see,
Full of poor joys, and meaner aims and ends,
Its matchless purity.

Saviour, my God, all else but this I bear,
This fills my cup; hast Thou too suffered this;
Ay more, denied by Thy first friend, and mocked
By Judas' kiss!

Calmed by the thought of what Thyself hast borne,
I turn from what I bear to what may be
The little place where Thou wouldst have me work
Awhile for Thee.

And here, my Lord, I cry—all else I bear,
Since Thou all this hast suffered more than I;
But the deaf ear that will not heed Thy word,
'Gainst this I cry!

The dull indifferent eye behind whose pane
A dull dead world of sense looks blindly out,
While holy things, that stir high souls, are spent
On souls that flout.

How bear the affront, dear Lord, that is for Thee!
Ah, senseless I, forgetting that fair spot
Thou fain hadst gathered to Thy kingly-breast,
But she "would not."

Or that poor country by the still lake's marge
That saw Thee, knew Thy works, yet feared Thy power
And with mad voice lift up the prayer that drove
Thee forth that hour.

What have I suffered that Thou hast not borne?
One only load is mine Thou couldst not bear,
The burden of a soul so all-unclean,
My sin's despair

Ah! but e'en this, my God, has been Thy load,
For not my greed and not my guilt alone,
But all the awful burden of all sin
Is still Thine own.

I grieve when men refuse Thy proffered love,
My own dark heart makes dark the world to me;
What is the awful vista of all time,
My Lord, to Thee?

IV.—JESUS THE CARPENTER.

'ISN'T this Joseph's son?'—ay, it is He;
Joseph the carpenter—same trade as me—
I thought as I'd find it—I knew it was here—
But my sight's getting queer.

I don't know right where, as His shed must ha' stood—
But often, as I've been a-planing my wood,
I've took off my hat, just with thinking of He
At the same work as me.

He warn't that set up that He couldn't stoop down
And work in the country for folks in the town;
And I'll warrant He felt a bit pride, like I've done
At a good job begun.

The parson he knows that I'll not make too free,
But on Sunday I feels as pleased as can be,
When I wears my clean smock, and sits in a pew,
And has thoughts a few.

I think of as how not the parson hissen,
As is teacher and father and shepherd o' men,
Not he knows as much of the Lord in that shed,
Where He earned His own bread.

And when I goes home to my missus, says she,
"Are ye wanting your key?"
For she knows my queer ways, and my love for the shed,
(We've been forty years wed).

So I comes right away by mysen, with the book,
And I turns the old pages and has a good look
For the text as I've found, as tells me as He
Were the same trade as me.

Why don't I mark it? Ah, many says so,
But I think I'd as lief, with your leave let it go:
It do seem that nice when I fall on it sudden—
Unexpected you know!

V.—GOOD-NIGHT.

IT is over now, she is gone to rest;
I have clasped the hands on the quiet breast.
Draw back the curtain, let in the light,
She will never shrink if it be too bright.

We were two in here but an hour gone by,
No streak was then in the midnight sky;
Now I am one to watch the day
Come glimmering up from the far away.

What will he say when he comes in,
Waked by the city's morning din,
Hoping to find and fearing to know
The sorrow he left but an hour ago?

What will he say, who has watched so long,
When he shall find who has come and gone?
Come a watcher that will not bide
Love's morning or noon or eventide.

He thought to kiss her by morning grey,
But God has thought to take her away.
What will he say? God knows, not I;
"Good night," he said, but never "good bye."

VI.—SONNET: A DAY IN JUNE.

"Out of heaven from God."

COME down amongst us, and men know it not!
They call it lightly a fine summer's day,
But breathing Nature knows it; not one spot
But trembles at the knowledge. Every spray
From garden unto forest at its lot
Smiles in the stillness, and the veil away
'Twixt earth and sky, earth's confines are forgot;
Praise shakes the world, too near its God to pray.

So when the Glory of the Godhead came
Long years ago and trod the paths of men,
They called Him prophet, and His words of flame
The poet's madness. Earth at her Lord's name
Was speechless; but 'twas hers alone to hide
Her widowed face in darkness, when He died.

Mathilde Blind.

1847—1896.

Mathilde Blind's career illustrates the saying that persons exist whom to have known is an education. She was profoundly influenced by the eminent men with whom she came in contact from the days when she sat at the feet of Mazzini, as she has told us in reminiscences as remarkable for their good taste and reticence as for their interest. She also connected her name with women of genius, Madame Roland and George Eliot, of whom she was the skilful and admiring biographer; and Marie Bashkirtseff, whom she discovered for the English public, and whose journals she has translated with remarkable ability. A traveller, continually on the move from land to land, she accumulated the impressions derived from many different regions, and many different societies. Yet her original work bears few traces of the impress of other minds. She occupies, indeed, an exceptional place among female poets, alike in her strong points and her weak ones. As a rule, it is the merit of poetesses to be easy and fluent: their fault to go playfully rippling round the difficulties with which they ought to grapple. Miss Blind, on the contrary, seems to have composed with difficulty, and to have beat out her verses upon the anvil. Cyrene wrestling with the lion will be an apt vignette for her poems when they attain

an illustrated edition. But the lion is thrown. Whatever difficulty it may have cost the authoress to work out her "Prophecy of Oran," or her "The Heather on Fire," the thing is done, and the impression on the reader's mind is nothing short of indelible. If the effect of "The Ascent of Man" is less definite, the cause is the comparative vagueness of the subject, and the necessary absence of the wonderful local colouring of the Highland poems. "Dramas in Miniature, her next publicat on, deals again with humanity in the concrete, and is full of dramatic passion and lyrical impulse. Miss Blind's feeling for nature was far beyond that which merely prompts clever descriptive passages; her local poems are steeped in a local atmosphere which produces a perfect illusion. The same feeling for nature breathes through her lyrics, whose fault it is to be overcharged with the pictorial element. Her poem "The Sower," from "Poems of the Open Air," may be quoted in this connection.

"The winds had hushed at last as by command;
The quiet sky above,
With its grey clouds spread o'er the fallow land,
Sat brooding like a dove.

There was no motion in the air, no sound
Within the tree-tops stirred,
Save when some last leaf, fluttering to the ground,
Dropped like a wounded bird:

Or when the swart rooks in a gathering crowd
With clamorous noises wheeled,
Hovering awhile, then swooped with wranglings loud
Down on the stubbly field.

For now the big-thewed horses, toiling slow
In straining couples yoked,
Patiently dragged the ploughshare to and fro
Till their wet haunches smoked.

Till the stiff acre, broken into clods,
Bruised by the harrow's tooth,
Lay lightly shaken, with its humid sods
Ranged into furrows smooth.

There looming lone, from rise to set of sun,
Without or pause or speed,
Solemnly striding by the furrows dun,
The sower sows the seed.

The sower sows the seed, which mouldering,
Deep coffined in the earth,
Is buried now, but with the future spring
Will quicken into birth.

Oh, poles of birth and death! Controlling Powers
Of human toil and need!
On this fair earth all men are surely sowers,
Surely all life is seed!

All life is seed, dropped in Time's yawning furrow,
Which with slow sprout and shoot,
In the revolving world's unfathomed morrow,
Will blossom and bear fruit.

When she does sing as the bird sings, no voice is sweeter. Of all lyrical forms, however, the most congenial to her powerful mind was the grave and weighty sonnet, which it is hardly possible to overload with import. Miss Blind was far more fortunate than sonnet-writers in general in finding thoughts great enough to fill fourteen lines, and some of her sonnets deserve no meaner praise than that of sublimity. Her besetting fault was one not unlikely to accompany conscious strength: an inattention to finish and polish which frequently annoys the sympathetic reader, and gives a needless handle to petty critics. Born on the 21st of March, 1847, she began to write at a very early age, while still a child filling copy-books with her juvenile efforts in fiction, poetry, and the drama. One of these, "A Tragedy on the Death of Robespierre," secured a word of commendation

from Louis Blanc, the French historian. Her first publication was an article on Shelley, contributed to the *Westminster Review*; her first volume, "The Prophecy of Oran," a narrative poem treating of the story of St. Columba and his disciples and their mission to the Hebrides, was published in 1881. "The Street Children's Dance," one of her most popular poems, appeared in this volume. Her next volume, "The Heather on Fire," a poem which deals with the removal of the Skye Crofters, was published in 1886. About the same time appeared her one novel "Tarantella," a highly imaginative romance, full of life, movement, and poetry, far too little known.

"The Ascent of Man" upon which she was engaged for many years, followed in 1889. This latter is in many respects her most important work; in it she has endeavoured to describe the evolution of Nature through the ages, showing the development of vegetable and animal life, the growth of man and the progress of society. The first part, "Chants of Life," is a series of wonderfully vivid pictures of this progress from the first germs of life in brute, formless claws, to the realisation of poetic hopes for the future of the world. Two noble sonnets conclude this part, which is followed by "The Pilgrim's Soul," an allegory of the redemption wrought through Love, leading up to and concluding with the powerful "Leading of Sorrow" (p. 271).

RICHARD GARNETT.

Later publications were "Songs and Sonnets" (1893), and "Birds of Passage" (1895). Her "Poetical Works," edited by A. Symons, were published in 1900, and "Shakespearean Sonnets" in 1902. She died on the 26th of November, 1896.

THE STREET-CHILDREN'S DANCE.

MATHILDE BLIND.

NOW the earth in fields and hills
Stirs with pulses of the Spring,
Nest embowering hedges ring
With interminable trills;
Sunlight runs a race with rain,
All the world grows young again.

Young as at the hour of birth:
From the grass the daisies rise
With the dew upon their eyes,
Sun-awakened eyes of earth;
Fields are set with cups of gold;
Can this budding world grow old?

Can the world grow old and sere,
Now when ruddy-tasselled trees
Stoop to every passing breeze,
Rustling in their silken gear;
Now when blossoms pink and white
Have their own terrestrial light?

Brooding light falls soft and warm,
Where in many a wind-rocked nest,
Curled up 'neath the she-bird's breast
Clustering eggs are hid from harm;
While the mellow-throated thrush
Warbles in the purpling bush.

Misty purple bathes the Spring:
Swallows flashing here and there
Float and dive on waves of air,
And make love upon the wing;
Crocus-buds in sheaths of gold
Burst like sunbeams from the mould.

Chestnut leaflets burst their buds,
Perching tiptoe on each spray,
Springing toward the radiant day,
As the bland, pacific floods
Of the generative sun
All the teeming earth o'errun.

Can this earth run o'er with beauty,
Laugh through leaf and flower and grain,
While in close-pent court and lane,
In the air so thick and sooty,
Little ones pace to and fro,
Weighted with their parents' woe?

Woe-predestined little ones!
Putting forth their buds of life
In an atmosphere of strife,
And crime-breeding ignorance;
Where the bitter surge of care
Freezes to a dull despair.

Dull despair and misery
Lie about them from their birth
Ugly curses, uglier mirth,
Are their earliest lullaby;
Fathers have they without name,
Mothers crushed by want and shame.

Brutish, overburthened mothers,
With their hungry children cast
Half-nude to the nipping-blast;
Little sisters with their brothers
Dragging in their arms all day
Children nigh as big as they.

Children mothered by the street:
Shouting, flouting, roaring after
Passers-by with gibes and laughter,
Diving between horses' feet,
In and out of drays and barrows,
Recklessly like London sparrows.

Mudlarks of our slums and alleys,
All unconscious of the blooming
World behind those housetops looming,
Of the happy fields and valleys,
Of the miracle of Spring
With its boundless blossoming.

Blossoms of humanity!
Poor soiled blossoms in the dust!
Through the thick defiling crust
Of soul-stifling poverty,
In your features may be traced
Childhood's beauty half effaced—

Childhood, stunted in the shadow
Of the light-debarring walls:
Not for you the cuckoo calls
O'er the silver-threaded meadow;
Not for you the lark on high
Pours his music from the sky.

Ah! you have your music too!
And come flocking round that player
Grinding at his organ there,
Summer-eyed and swart of hue,
Rattling off his well-worn tune
On this April afternoon.

Lovely April lights of pleasure
Flit o'er want-beclouded features
Of these little outcast creatures,
As they swing with rhythmic measure,
In the courage of their rags,
Lightly o'er the slippery flags.

Little footfalls, lightly glancing
In a luxury of motion,
Supple as the waves of ocean
In your elemental dancing,
How you fly, and wheel, and spin,
For your hearts, too, dance within.

Dance along with mirth and laughter,
Buoyant, fearless, and elate,
Dancing in the teeth of fate,
Ignorant of your hereafter,
That with all its tragic glooms
Blindly on your future looms.

Past and future, hence away!
Joy, diffused throughout the earth,
Centre in this moment's mirth
Of ecstatic holiday:
Once in all their lives' dark story,
Touch them, Fate! with April glory.

LOVE-TRILOGY.

MATHILDE BLIND.

I.

SHE stood against the Orient sun,
Her face inscrutable for light;
A myriad larks in unison
Sang o'er her, soaring out of sight.

A myriad flowers around her feet
Burst flame-like from the yielding sod,
Till all the wandering airs were sweet
With incense mounting up to God.

A mighty rainbow shook, inclined
Towards her, from the Occident,
Girdling the cloud-wrack which enshrined
Half the light-bearing firmament.

Lit showers flashed golden o'er the hills,
And trees flung silver to the breeze,
And, scattering diamonds, fleet-foot rills
Fled laughingly across the leas.

Yea Love, the skylarks laud but thee,
And writ in flowers thine awful name;
Spring is thy shade, dread Ecstasy,
And life a brand which feeds thy flame.

II.

WINDING all my life about thee,
Let me lay my lips on thine;
What is all the world without thee,
Mine—oh mine!

Let me press my heart out on thee,
Grape of life's most fiery vine,
Spilling sacramental on thee
Love's red wine.

Let thy strong eyes yearning o'er me
Draw me with their force divine;
All my soul has gone before me
Clasping thine.

If I follow, oh my lover,
As the shadow follows shine,
'Tis because my heart's run over
Full in thine.

Yea, all springs of life in motion,
O belovèd one, combine,
Mix as rain drops with the ocean,
Mine and thine.

III.

I CHARGE you, O winds of the West, O winds with the wings of the dove,
That ye seek the beloved of my soul, breathing low that I sicken for love.

I charge you, O dews of the Dawn, O tears of the star of the morn,
That ye fall at the feet of my love with the sound of one weeping forlorn.

I charge you, O birds of the Air, O birds flying home to your nest,
That ye sing in his ears of the joy that for ever has fled from my breast.

I charge you, O flowers of the Earth, O frailest of things, and most fair.
That ye droop in his path as the life in me shrivels consumed by despair.

O Moon, when he lifts up his face, when he seeth the waning of thee,
A memory of her who lies wan on the limits of life let it be.

Many tears cannot quench, nor my sighs extinguish the flames of love's fire,
Which lifteth my heart like a wave, and smites it, and breaks its desire.

I rise like one in a dream when I see the red sun flaring low.
That drags me back shuddering from sleep each morning to life with its woe.

I go like one in a dream, unbidden my feet know the way
To that garden where love stood in blossom with the red and white hawthorn of May.

The song of the throstle is hushed, and the fountain is dry to its core,
The moon cometh up as of old; she seeks, but she finds him no more.

The pale-faced, pitiful moon shines down on the grass where I weep,
My face to the earth, and my breast in an anguish ne'er soothed into sleep.

The moon returns, and the spring, birds warble, trees burst into leaf,
But Love once gone, goes for ever, and all that endures is the grief.

SONNETS.

MATHILDE BLIND.

I.

THE DEAD.

THE dead abide with us! Though stark and cold
Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still:
They have forged our chains of being for good or ill,
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold.
Our perishable bodies are the mould
In which their strong imperishable will—
Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil—
Hath grown incorporate through dim time untold

Vibrations infinite of life in death,
As a star's travelling light survives its star!
So may we hold our lives, than when we are
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,
They shall not drag us to their judgment-bar,
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.

II.

NIRVANA.

DIVEST thyself, O Soul, of vain desire!
Bid hope farewell, dismiss all coward fears;
Take leave of empty laughter, emptier tears,
And quench, for ever quench, the wasting fire
Wherein this heart, as in a funeral pyre,
Aye burns, yet is consumed not. Years on years,
Moaning with memories in thy maddened ears—
Let at thy word, like refluent waves, retire.

Enter thy soul's vast realm as Sovereign Lord,
And like that angel with the flaming sword,
Wave off life's clinging hands. Then chains will fall
From the poor slave of self's hard tyranny—
And Thou, a ripple rounded by the sea,
In rapture lost be lapped within the All.

THE ASCENT OF MAN.

1889.

MATHILDE BLIND.

(PART III.)

THE LEADING OF SORROW.

"Our spirits have climbed high
By reason of the passion of our grief,—
And from the top of sense, looked over sense
To the significance and heart of things
Rather than things themselves."

E. B. BROWNING.

THROUGH a twilight land, a moaning region,
Thick with sighs that shook the trembling air
Land of shadows whose dim crew was legion,
Lost I hurried, hunted by despair.
Quailed my heart like an expiring splendour,
Fitful flicker of a faltering fire,
Smitten chords which tempest-stricken render
Rhythms of anguish from a breaking lyre.

Love had left me in a land of shadows,
Lonely on the ruins of delight,
And I grieved with tearless grief of widows,
Moaned as orphans homeless in the night.
Love had left me knocking at Death's portal—
Shone his star and vanished from my sky—
And I cried: "Since Love, even Love, is mortal
Take, unmake, and break me; let me die."

Then, the twilight's grisly veils dividing,
Phantom-like there stole one o'er the plain,
Wavering mists for ever round it gliding
Hid the face I strove to scan in vain.
Spake the veiled one: "Solitary weeper,
'Mid the myriad mourners thou'rt but one:
Come, and thou shalt see the awful reaper,
Evil, reaping all beneath the sun."

On my hand the clay-cold hand did fasten
As it murmured—"Up and follow me;
O'er the thickly peopled earth we'll hasten,
Yet more thickly packed with misery."
And I followed: ever in the shadow
Of that looming form I fared along;
Now o'er mountains, now through wood and meadow,
Or through cities with their surging throng.

With none other for a friend or fellow
Those relentless footsteps were my guide
To the sea-caves echoing with the hollow
Immemorial moaning of the tide.
Laughed the sunlight on the living ocean,
Danced and rocked itself upon the spray,
And its shivered beams in twinkling motion
Gleamed like star-motes in the Milky Way.

Lo, beneath those waters surging, flowing,
I beheld the Deep's fantastic bowers;
Shapes which seemed alive and yet were growing
On their stalks like animated flowers.
Sentient flowers which seemed to glow and glimmer
Soft as ocean blush of Indian shells,
White as foam-drift in the moony shimmer
Of those sea-lit, wave-pavilioned dells.

Yet even here, as in the fire-eyed panther,
In disguise the eternal hunger lay,
For each feathery, velvet-tufted anther
Lay in ambush waiting for its prey.
Tiniest jewelled fish that flashed like lightning,
Blindly drawn, came darting through the wave,
When, a stifling sack above them tightening,
Closed the ocean-blossom's living grave.

Now we fared through forest glooms primeval
Through whose leaves the light but rarely shone,
Where the buttressed tree-trunks looked coeval
With the time-worn, ocean-fretted stone;
Where, from stem to stem their tendrils looping,
Coiled the lithe lianas fold on fold,
Or, in cataracts of verdure drooping,
From on high their billowy leafage rolled.

Where beneath the dusky woodland cover,
While the noon-hush holds all living things,
Butterflies of tropic splendour hover
In a maze of rainbow-coloured wings:
Some like stars light up their own green heaven,
Some are spangled like a golden toy,
Or like flowers from their foliage driven
In the fiery ecstasy of joy.

But, the forest slumber rudely breaking,
Through the silence rings a piercing yell;
At the cry unnumbered beasts, awaking,
With their howls the loud confusion swell.
'Tis the cry of some frail creature panting
In the tiger's lacerating grip;
In its flesh carnivorous teeth implanting,
While the blood smokes round his wrinkled lip.

'Tis the scream some bird in terror utters,
With its wings weighed down by leaned fears,
As from bough to downward bough it flutters
Where the snake its glistening crest uprears:
Eyes of sluggish greed through rank weeds stealing,
Breath whose venomous fumes mount through the air,
Till benumbed the helpless victim, reeling,
Drops convulsed into the reptile snare.

Now we fared o'er sweltering wastes whose steaming
Clouds of tawny sand the wanderer blind.
Herds of horses with their long manes streaming
Snorted thirstily against the wind;
O'er the waste they scoured in shadowy numbers,
Gasped for springs their raging thirst to cool.
And, like sick men mocked in fevered slumbers,
Stoop to drink—and find a phantom pool.

What of antelopes crunched by the leopard?
What if hounds run down the timid hare?
What though sheep, strayed from the faithful shepherd,
Perish helpless in the lion's lair?
The all-seeing sun shines on unheeding,
In the night shines the unruffled moon,
Though on earth brute myriads, preying, bleeding,
Put creation harshly out of tune.

Cried I, turning to the shrouded figure—
"Oh, in mercy veil this cruel strife!
Sanguinary orgies which disfigure
The green ways of labyrinthine life.
From the needs and greeds of primal passion,
From the serpent's track and lion's den,
To the world our human hands did fashion,
Lead me to the kindly haunts of men."

And through fields of corn we passed together,
Orange golden in the brooding heat,
Where brown reapers in the harvest weather
Cut ripe swathes of downward rustling wheat.
In the orchards dangling red and yellow,
Clustered fruit weighed down the bending sprays;
On a hundred hills the vines grew mellow
In the warmth of fostering autumn days.

Through the air the shrilly twittering swallows
Flashed their nimble shadows on the leas;
Red-flecked cows were glassed in golden shallows,
Purple clover hummed with restless bees.
Herdsmen drove the cattle from the mountain,
To the fold the shepherd drove his flocks,
Village girls drew water from the fountain,
Village yokels piled the full-eared shocks.

From the white town dozing in the valley,
Round its vast Cathedral's solemn shade,
Citizens strolled down the walnut alley
Where youth courted and glad childhood played.
"Peace on earth," I murmured; "let us linger—
Here the wage of life seems good at least:"
As I spake the veiled One raised a finger
Where the moon broke flowering in the aest.

Faintly muttering from deep mountain ranges,
Muffled sounds rose hoarsely on the night,
As the crash of foundering avalanches
Wakes hoarse echoes in each Alpine height.
Near and nearer sounds the roaring—thunder,
Mortal thunder, crashes through the vale;
Lightning flash of muskets breaks from under
Groves once haunted by the nightingale.

Men clutch madly at each weapon—women,
Children crouch in cellars, under roofs,
For the town is circled by their foemen—
Shakes the ground with clang of trampling hoofs.
Shot on shot the volleys hiss and rattle,
Shrilly whistling fly the murderous balls,
Fiercely roars the tumult of the battle
Round the hard-contested, dear-bought walls.

Horror, horror! The fair town is burning,
Flames burst forth, wild sparks and ashes fly;
With her children's blood the green earth's turning
Blood-red—blood-red, too, the cloud-winged sky.
Crackling flare the streets: from the lone steeple
The great clock booms forth its ancient chime,
And its dolorous quarters warn the people
Of the conquering troops that march with time.

Fallen lies the fair old town, its houses
Charred and ruined gape in smoking heaps;
Here with shouts a ruffian band carouses,
There an outraged woman vainly weeps.
In the fields where the ripe corn lies mangled,
Where the wounded groan beneath the dead,
Friend and foe, now helplessly entangled,
Stain red poppies with a guiltier red.

There the dog howls o'er his perished master,
There the crow comes circling from afar;
All vile things that batten on disaster
Follow feasting in the wake of war.
Famine follows—what they ploughed and planted
The unhappy peasants shall not reap;
Sickening of strange meats and fever haunted,
To their graves they prematurely creep.

"Hence"—I cried in unavailing pity—
"Let us flee these scenes of monstrous strife,
Seek the pale of some imperial city
Where the law rules starlike o'er man's life'
Straightway floating o'er blue sea and river,
We were plunged into a roaring cloud,
Wherethrough lamps in ague fits did shiver
O'er the surging multitudinous crowd.

Piles of stone, their cliff-like walls uprearing,
Flashed in luminous lines along the night;
Jets of flame, spasmodically flaring,
Splashed black pavements with a sickly light;
Fabulous gems shone here, and glowing coral,
Shimmering stuffs from many an Eastern loom,
And vast piles of tropic fruits and floral
Marvels seemed to mock November's gloom.

But what prowls near princely mart and dwelling,
Whence through many a thundering thoroughfare
Rich folk roll on cushions softly swelling
To the week-day feast and Sunday prayer?
Yea, who prowl there, hunger-nipped and pallid,
Breathing nightmares limned upon the gloom?
'Tis but human rubbish, gaunt and squalid,
Whom their country spurns for lack of room.

In their devious track we mutely follow,
Mutely climb dim flights of oozy stairs,
Where through gap-toothed, mizzling roof the yellow
Pestilent fog blends with the fetid air.
Through the unhinged door's discordant slamming
Ring the gruesome sounds of savage strife—
Howls of babes, the drunken father's damning,
Counter-cursing of the shrill-tongued wife.

Children feebly crying on their mother
In a wailful chorus—"Give us food!"
Man and woman glaring at each other
Like two gaunt wolves with a famished brood.
Till he snatched a stick, and, madly staring,
Struck her blow and blow upon the head;
And she, reeling back, gasped, hardly caring—
"Ah, you've done it now, Jim"—and was dead.

Dead—dead—dead—the miserable creature—
Never to feel hunger's cruel fang
Wring the bowels of rebellious nature
That her infants might be spared the pang.
"Dead! Good luck to her!" The man's teeth chattered,
Stone-still stared he with blank eyes and hard,
Then, his frame with one big sob nigh shattered,
Fled—and cut his throat down in the yard.

Dark the night—the children wail forsaken,
Crane their wrinkled necks and cry for food,
Drop off into fitful sleep, or waken
Trembling like a sparrow's ravished brood.
Dark the night—the rain falls on the ashes,
Feebly hissing on the feeble heat,
Filters through the ceiling, drops in splashes
On the little children's naked feet.

Dark the night—the children wail forsaken—
Is there none, ah, none, to heed their moan?
Yea, at dawn one little one is taken,
Four poor souls are left, but one is gone.
Gone—escaped—flown from the shame and sorrow
Waiting for them at life's sombre gate,
But the hand of merciless to-morrow
Drags the others shuddering to their fate.

But one came—a girlish thing—a creature
Flung by wanton hands 'mid lust and crime—
A poor outcast, yet by right of nature
Sweet as odour of the upland thyme.
Scapegoat of a people's sins, and hunted,
Howled at, hooted to the wilderness,
To that wilderness of deaf hearts, blunted
To the depths of woman's dumb distress.

Jetsam, flotsam of the monster city,
Spurned, defiled, reviled, that outcast came
To those babes that whined for love and pity,
Gave them bread bought with the wage of shame.
Gave them bread, and gave them warm, maternal
Kisses not on sale for any price:
Yea, a spark, a flash of some eternal
Sympathy shone through those haunted eyes.

Ah, perchance through her dark life's confusion,
Through the haste and taste of fevered hours,
Gusts of memory on her youth's pollution
Blew forgotten scents of faded flowers.
And she saw the cottage near the wild wood,
With its lichened roof and latticed panes,
Strayed once more through golden fields of childhood,
Hyacinth dells and hawthorn-scented lanes.

Heard once more the song of nesting thrushes
And the blackbird's long mellifluous note,
Felt once more the glow of maiden blushes
Burn through rosy cheek and milkwhite throat
In that orchard where the apple blossom
Lightly shaken fluttered on her hair,
As the heart was fluttering in her bosom
When her sweetheart came and kissed her there.

Often came he in the lilac-laden
Moonlit twilight, often pledged his word;
But she was a simple country-maiden,
He the offspring of a noble lord.
Fading lilacs May's farewell betoken,
Fledglings fly and soon forget the nest;
Lightly may a young man's vows be broken,
And the heart break in a woman's breast.

Gathered like a sprig of summer roses
In the dewy morn and flung away,
To the girl the father's door now closes,
Let her shelter henceforth how she may.
Who will house the miserable mother
With her child, a helpless castaway!
"I, am I the keeper of my brother?"
Asks smug virtue as it turns to pray!

Lovely are the earliest Lenten lilies,
Primrose pleiads, hyacinthine sheets;
Stripped and rifled from their pastoral valleys,
See them sold now in the public streets!
Other flowers are sold there besides posies—
Eyes may have the hyacinth's glowing blue,
Rounded cheeks the velvet bloom of roses,
Taper necks the rain-washed lily's hue.

But a rustic blossom! Love and duty
Bound up in a child whom hunger slays!
Ah! but one thing still is left her—beauty
Fresh, untarnished yet—and beauty pays.
Beauty keeps her child alive a little,
Then it dies—her woman's love with it—
Beauty's brilliant sceptre, ah, how brittle,
Drags her daily deeper down the pit.

Ruin closes o'er her—hideous, nameless;
Each fresh morning marks a deeper fall;
Till at twenty—callous, cankered, shameless,
She lies dying at the hospital.
Drink, more drink, she calls for—her harsh laughter
Grates upon the meekly praying nurse,
Eloquent about her soul's hereafter:
"Souls be blowed!" she sings out with a curse.

And so dies, an unrepenting sinner—
Pitched into her pauper's grave what time
That most noble lord rides by to dinner
Who had wooed her in her innocent prime.
And in after-dinner talk he preaches
Resignation—o'er his burgundy—
Till a grateful public dubs his speeches
Oracles of true philanthropy.

Peace ye call this? Call this justice, meted
Equally to rich and poor alike?
Better than this peace the battle's heated
Cannon-balls that ask not whom they strike!
Better than this masquerade of culture
Hiding strange hyæna appetites,
The frank ravening of the raw-necked vulture
As its beak the senseless carrion smites.

What of men in bondage, toiling blunted
In the roaring factory's lurid gloom?
What of cradled infants starved and stunted?
What of woman's nameless martyrdom?
The all-seeing sun shines on unheeding,
Shines by night the calm, unruffled moon,
Though the human myriads, preying, bleeding,
Put creation harshly out of tune.

"Hence, ah, hence"—I sobbed in quivering passion—
"From these fearful haunts of fiendish men!
Better far the plain, carnivorous fashion
Which is practised in the lion's den."
And I fled—yet staggering still did follow
In the footprints of my shrouded guide—
To the sea-caves echoing with the hollow
Immemorial moaning of the tide.

Sinking, swelling roared the wintry ocean,
Pitch-black chasms struck with flying blaze,
As the cloud-winged storm-sky's sheer commotion
Showed the blank Moon's mute Medusa face
White o'er wastes of water—surges crashing
Over surges in the formless gloom,
And a mastless hulk, with great seas washing
Her scourged flanks, pitched toppling to her doom.

Through the crash of wave on wave gigantic,
Through the thunder of the hurricane,
My wild heart in breaking shrilled with frantic
Exultation—"Chaos come again!
Yea, let earth be split and cloven asunder
With man's still accumulating curse—
Life is but a momentary blunder
In the cycle of the Universe.

"Yea, let earth with forest-belted mountains,
Hills and valleys, cataracts and plains,
With her clouds and storms and fires and fountains,
Pass with all her rolling sphere contains,
Melt, dissolve again into the ocean,
Ocean fade into a nebulous haze!"
And I sank back without sense or motion
'Neath the blank Moon's mute Medusa face.

Moments, years, or ages passed, when, lifting
Freezing lids, I felt the heavens on high,
And, innumerable as the sea-sands drifting,
Stars unnumbered drifted through the sky.
Rhythmical in luminous rotation,
In dædalian maze they reel and fly,
And their rushing light is Time's pulsation
In his passage through Eternity.

Constellated suns, fresh lit, declining,
Were ignited now, now quenched in space,
Rolling round each other, or inclining
Orb to orb in multi-coloured rays.
Ever showering from their flaming fountains
Light more light on each far-circling earth,
Till life stirred crepuscular seas, and mountains
Heaved convulsive with the throes of birth.

And the noble brotherhood of planets,
Knitted each to each by links of light,
Circled round their suns, nor knew a minute's
Lapse or languor in their ceaseless flight.
And pale moons and rings and burning splinters
Of wrecked worlds swept round their parent spheres,
Clothed with spring or sunk in polar winters
As their sun draws nigh or disappears.

Still new vistas of new stars—far dwindling—
Through the firmament like dewdrops roll,
Torches of the Cosmos which enkindling
Flash their revelation on the soul.
Yea, One spake there—though nor form nor feature
Shown—a Voice came from the peaks of time :—
"Wilt thou judge me, wilt thou curse me, Creature
Whom I raised up from the Ocean slime ?

"Long I waited—ages rolled o'er ages—
As I crystallized in granite rocks,
Struggling dumb through immemorial stages,
Glacial æons, fiery earthquake shocks.
In fierce throbs of flame or slow upheaval,
Speck by tiny speck, I topped the seas,
Leaped from earth's dark womb, and in primeval
Forests shot up shafts of mammoth trees.

"Through a myriad forms I yearned and panted,
Putting forth quick shoots in endless swarms—
Giant-hoofed, sharp-tusked, or finned or planted
Writhing on the reef with pinioned arms.
I have climbed from reek of sanguine revels
In Cimmerian wood and thorny wild,
Slowly upwards to the dawnlit levels
Where I bore thee, oh my youngest Child!

"Oh, my heir and hope of my to-morrow,
I—I draw thee on through fume and fret,
Croon to thee in pain and call through sorrow,
Flowers and stars take for thy alphabet.
Through the eyes of animals appealing,
Feel my fettered spirit yearn to thine,
Who, in storm of will and clash of feeling,
Shape the life that shall be—the divine.

"Oh, redeem me from my tiger rages,
Reptile greed, and foul hyæna lust;
With the hero's deeds, the thoughts of sages,
Sow and fructify this passive dust;
Drop in dew and healing love of woman
On the bloodstained hands of hungry strife,
Till there break from passion of the Human
Morning-glory of transfigured life.

"I have cast my burden on thy shoulder;
Unimagined potencies have given
That from formless Chaos thou shalt mould her
And translate gross earth to luminous heaven.
Bear, oh, bear the terrible compulsion,
Flinch not from the path thy fathers trod,
From Man's martyrdom in slow convulsion,
Will be born the infinite goodness—God."

Ceased the Voice: and as it ceased it drifted
  Like the seashell's inarticulate moan;
From the Deep, on wings of flame uplifted,
  Rose the sun rejoicing and alone.
Laughed in light upon the living ocean,
  Danced and rocked itself upon the spray,
And its shivered beams in twinkling motion
  Gleamed like star-motes of the Milky Way

And beside me in the golden morning
  I beheld my shrouded phantom-guide;
But no longer sorrow-veiled and mourning—
  It became transfigured by my side.
And I knew—as one escaped from prison
  Sees old things again with fresh surprise—
It was Love himself, Love re-arisen
  With the Eternal shining through his eyes

LOVE IN EXILE.

MATHILDE BLIND.

"Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine."

LORD TENNYSON.

SONGS.

I.

THOU walkest with me as the spirit-light
Of the hushed moon, high o'er a snowy hill,
Walks with the houseless traveller all the night,
When trees are tongueless and when mute the rill.
Moon of my soul, O phantasm of delight,
Thou walkest with me still.

The vestal flame of quenchless memory burns
In my soul's sanctuary. Yea, still for thee
My bitter heart hath yearned, as moonward yearns
Each separate wave-pulse of the clamorous sea:
My Moon of love, to whom for ever turns
The life that aches through me.

II.

I was again beside my Love in dream:
Earth was so beautiful, the moon was shining;
The muffled voice of many a cataract stream
Came like a love-song, as, with arms entwining,
Our hearts were mixed in unison supreme.

The wind lay spell-bound in each pillared pine,
The tasselled larches had no sound or motion,
As my whole life was sinking into thine—
Sinking into a deep, unfathomed ocean
Of infinite love—uncircumscribed, divine.

Night held her breath, it seemed, with all her stars:
Eternal eyes that watched in mute compassion
Our little lives o'erleap their mortal bars,
Fused in the fulness of immortal passion,
A passion as immortal as the stars.

There was no longer any thee or me;
No sense of self, no wish or incompleteness;
The moment, rounded to Eternity,
Annihilated time's destructive fleetness:
For all but love itself had ceased to be.

III.

(IV.)

I would I were the glow-worm, thou the flower,
That I might fill thy cup with glimmering light;
I would I were the bird, and thou the bower,
To sing thee songs throughout the summer night.

I would I were a pine tree deeply rooted,
And thou the lofty, cloud-beleaguered rock,
Still, while the blasts of heaven around us hooted,
To cleave to thee and weather every shock.

I would I were the rill, and thou the river;
So might I, leaping from some headlong steep,
With all my waters lost in thine for ever,
Be hurried onwards to the unfathomed deep.

I would—what would I not? O foolish dreaming!
My words are but as leaves by autumn shed,
That, in the faded moonlight idly gleaming,
Drop on the grave where all our love lies dead.

IV.

(VII.)

Why will you haunt me unawares,
And walk into my sleep,
Pacing its shadowy thoroughfares,
Where long-dried perfume scents the airs,
While ghosts of sorrow creep,
Where on Hope's ruined altarstairs,
With ineffectual beams,
The Moon of Memory coldly glares
Upon the land of dreams?

My yearning eyes were fain to look
Upon your hidden face;
Their love, alas! you could not brook,
But in your own you mutely took
My hand, and for a space
You wrung it till I throbbed and shook,
And woke with wildest moan
And wet face channelled like a brook
With your tears or my own.

V.

(X.)

On life's long round by chance I found
A dell impearled with dew,
Where hyacinths, gushing from the ground
Lent to the earth heaven's native hue
Of holy blue.

I sought that plot of azure light
Once more in gloomy hours;
But snow had fallen overnight
And wrapped in mortuary white
My fairy ring of flowers.

VI.

L'ENVOI.

THOU art the goal for which my spirit longs;
As dove on dove,
Bound for one home, I send thee all my songs
With all my love.

Thou art the haven with fair harbour lights;
Safe locked in thee,
My heart would anchor after stormful nights
Alone at sea.

Thou art the rest of which my life is fain,
The perfect peace;
Absorbed in thee the world, with all its pain
And toil, would cease.

Thou art the heaven, to which my soul would go
O dearest eyes,
Lost in your light you would turn hell below
To Paradise.

Thou all in all for which my heart-blood yearns!
Yea, near or far—
Where the unfathomed ether throbs and burns
With star on star,

Or where, enkindled by the fires of June,
The fresh earth glows,
Blushing beneath the mystical white moon
Through rose on rose—

Thee, thee I see, thee feel in all live things,
Beloved one;
In the first bird which tremulously sings
Ere peep of sun;

In the last nestling orphaned in the hedge,
Rocked to and fro,
When dying summer shudders in the sedge,
And swallows go;
When roaring snows rush down the mountain pass,
March floods with rills,
Or April lightens through the living grass
In daffodils;
When poppied cornfields simmer in the heat
With tare and thistle,
And, like winged clouds above the mellow wheat,
The starlings whistle;
When stained with sunset the wide moorlands glare
In the wild weather,
And clouds with flaring craters smoke and flare
Red o'er red heather;
When the bent moon, on frostbound midnight's waking,
Leans to the snow
Like some world-mother whose deep heart is breaking
O'er human woe.
As the round sun rolls red into the ocean,
Till all the sea
Glows fluid gold, even so life's mazy motion
Is dyed with thee:
For as the wave-like years subside and roll,
O heart's desire,
Thy soul glows interfused within my soul,
A quenchless fire.
Yea, thee I feel, all storms of life above,
Near though afar;
O thou my glorious morning star of love
And evening star.

Michael Field.

MICHAEL FIELD has published several volumes of plays: in 1884, "Callirhöe" and "Fair Rosamund"; in 1885, "The Father's Tragedy," "William Rufus," and "Loyalty or Love?" in 1886, "Brutus Ultor"; in 1887, "Canute the Great" and "The Cup of Water"; in 1890, "The Tragic Mary"; in 1892, "Stephania." She has also published three volumes of lyrics, entitled "Long Ago" (1889), "Sight and Song" (1892), "Under the Bough" (1893), besides poems in various journals and magazines, with a few pieces of prose. It is upon her tragedies that Michael Field can most justly rest a claim to distinction; the form of poetry in which the least excellence has been shown by English poets during the last and the present centuries. A careful student of the matter might come to the conclusion, that the best tragedies of the century have been written, either by poets not of the first order, or by poets of the first order, whose best work is not dramatic in form. Whether or no Michael Field be a poet of the first order, at least few poets of our century, with powers equal to hers, have found in tragedy the one form most congenial to their imagination. The palmary virtue of her tragedies we take to be their conception, and their treatment, of the ruling passions, and the dominant ideas of men and women. Many tragedians

labour to express that in human nature, which is uncommon; and that in human fortunes, which is unusual. And this they do, not because by such means they can best bring to light the deep and radical passions, or ideas, of men, but for the sake of strangeness and of novelty. No one acquainted with the great Greek and English masterpieces of tragedy can condemn the tragic usage of what is uncommon or unusual; but he perceives that Sophocles and Shakespeare, each after his kind, concluded all under law; the sorrows of Œdipus and of Lear bear witness to something more lasting, and more universal, than themselves. It is the peculiar note or mark of Michael Field, that her tragedies have a profound spirit of this sort; yet a spirit very peculiar to themselves. In all her plays there is an appeal to man's ruling passions and to his dominant ideas but to passions and to ideas of one special kind The appeal is always made to those human instincts, which are traditional, or inherited, or innate; not to passions from without, creatures of circumstance, or of chance. The motherhood of earth, with its deep and personal appeal; the claims of patriotism, with its holiness and its commanding sanction; the necessities of a man's nature struggling to work out its destiny in fulfilment of inherited desires; all passions, instincts, and ideas which come from sources far off in the past history of a man, a race, a country, or which come from sources deeply rooted in one human soul: these are the materials of Michael Field. It might almost seem as though these tragedies, so full of this vehement and vigorous spirit, could only proceed from this age: an age in which history is concerned with the social com-

binations of men; science, with organic life; and studies of every kind, with origins, with developments, and with vital forces. Wordsworth, wishing to show how secluded and simple country lives can yet be tragic, wrote:—

> "Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
> The generations are prepared: the pangs,
> The internal pangs, are ready";

those great lines express with perfect accuracy the tragic genius, the tragic attitude, of Michael Field: the words "prepared" and "ready," in their fulness of meaning, might have been chosen by her. Again, Shakespeare's yet greater lines, where he imagines—

> ". . . the prophetic soul
> Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,"

in like manner remind us of Michael Field; of the way in which, once more to quote Wordsworth, she conceives of Brutus or of Canute, as Christian king and Roman consul, each hearing—

> ". . . some still response,
> Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
> The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
> Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
> Its rights and virtues."

That which a man of science, some master of the comparative method in history or in anthropology, would term a tendency, is for Michael Field a tragic motive: and thus she acts well upon that lofty definition of poetry, that it is "the impassioned expression, which is the countenance of all science," and also "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." And this very power of hers gives to her a fine simplicity of purpose and of construction: a scene here, a speech there, this or that character and phrase, may some-

what offend us; but never, in point of intention or design. Here we may touch upon the literary execution of Michael Field's plays. In their virtues and in their vices, they are Elizabethan: the virtues are many, the vices are few. It will serve to indicate the admirable strength and beauty of Michael Field's expression at its highest, if we make a bold comparison. Lear, in the most tragic and pitiful lines of Shakespeare, cries to the winds and storms:—

> "Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
> I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness
> I never gave you kingdoms, called you children,
> You owe me no subscription; why then, let fall
> Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
> A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man;—
> But yet I call you servile ministers,
> That have with two pernicious daughters joined
> Your high engendered battles, 'gainst a head
> So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!"

It is reasonable to think that England will never give birth to a second Shakespeare; it is unreasonable to hold that no one can possibly catch anything of his spirit. Michael Field, at her highest point of excellence, writes with an imagination, an ardour, a magnificence, in degree far lower, in kind not other, than the imagination, the ardour, the magnificence of Shakespeare. In witness of this great claim, let us point to such passages as the last scene of "William Rufus," with the speeches of Beowulf, the blinded Saxon peasant; to the third scene of "Fair Rosamund," with the speeches of Queen Elinor; to the fourth scene of "Canute," where Gunhild the Norse prophetess, confronts the king; to the scene of Coresus' death in "Callirhöe"; to the fourth act of "The Father's Tragedy," with the speech of starving

Rothsay. And these passages are not brilliant, chance felicities, purple patches of composition; they are central, or final passages, in which the writer's imagination becomes intense, and quickens into its most perfect form. And, the very faults or vices of Michael Field's manner proceed from a laudable impulse; every phrase must be characteristic, there must be no commonplace, no sign of flagging. Hence come certain violences of expression, audacities and extravagancies, Elizabethan in style, but without the justification of Elizabethan dramatists. They had no traditions of English tragedy behind them; tragic verse was new, the classics were new, life itself was new, and all the romance and adventurous spirit of the world. Their extravagance, whether of careful Euphuism or of careless energy, was in equal measure an extravagance of ignorance, of inexperience. But in Michael Field, there is too often a deliberate style of mistaken ingenuity and force. Yet no reader, in whatever degree he felt this effect, could feel that it vitiated an entire play; the extravagance is merely verbal, never one of conception. It may also be, that this less happy style is the result of the peculiar spirit of these plays, and not only of Elizabethan influence. The cumbrous magnificence of Æschylus, ridiculed by Aristophanes, came of his vast and mysterious conceptions: the singular difficulty of Sophocles came of his subtle and quick conceptions. Just so may this occasional infelicity of Michael Field come of her love for, of her occupation with, those primitive or radical conceptions, the strength of which is expressed in struggle and in conflict. A certain fierceness and savagery are perceptible, in even the

gentler and the more pitiful of Michael Field's characters; as the poor and the simple are apt, under emotion, to speak in language of more than common beauty or strength, so do the men and women of these plays; and we must not be too hasty in concluding, that what may be a proper stroke of imagination, is but an inartistic mannerism. For, after all, Michael Field's writing expresses character, it is characteristic. Perhaps certain modern readers or writers, who might see nothing but praise in that expression, would see nothing but blame, did we exchange "characteristic" for "moral." It is a curious delusion of our times, that the words ethical and moral are taken to mean didactic and doctrinal; a lamentable, if also a ludicrous, mistake. Does a poet preach virtue or vice? In either case, he is didactic. Does he exhibit the lives, the actions, the virtues, or the vices, of men? He is moral. A poet, who tells the truth of things, whose imagination is true, may present the lives of men in their complexity, their suffering, their desire, with no word of doctrine or of advice, and his work will be inevitably moral; full of character, from his work, glad or sorrowful, pleasant or painful, the reader will inevitably learn something; he will learn something of the laws of life. This, indeed, is all that Arnold meant by his famous definition of literature; literature deals with life, as it appears to thought; poetry deals with life, as it appears to imagination; and imagination is the harmony of emotion and thought. It is this that Aristotle held in his poetics; where character with plot, that is, man in the struggle of life, is presented as the subject for tragedy, with all the ornaments of musical speech.

Certainly, the plays of Michael Field bear the tests of Arnold and of Aristotle: "radiant, adorned, outside," they are; they have also "a hidden ground of thought and of austerity within."

The lyrical poems of the volume, "Long Ago," are suggested each by a fragment of Sappho. Many of them have the grace and charm of the Greek Anthology; but, since Catullus failed in translating Sappho, it is no reproach to Michael Field that she has composed some exquisite verses, but has not brought Sappho back to us. Indeed, Michael Field is not always happy in her lyrics and sonnets; they are apt to be too full of bold phrases and of struggling thoughts, which cannot contain themselves within their bounds. But in this age of finished pettiness and prettiness in poetry, it is a great thing to excel in the more arduous tasks. Not that a perfect lyric is anything but a rare and fine achievement, only the greatest poets can write a perfect lyric. But so many living poets, unable to produce lyrics of the highest excellence, still persist in their attempt, and produce innumerable lyrics of a poor quality, that the sight of a poet, grappling with the labours of tragedy, is an inspiring and a welcome sight. And much of Michael Field's dramatic verse, in her pastoral or more delicate scenes, has all the grace and charm of a lyrical imagination. The scenes of the faun in "Callirhöe," of the fairies in "Fair Rosamund," are instances of a quaint and pathetic beauty.

One word, before conclusion, may be said about the historical character of the plays. All, but two, are concerned with history; all of the historical plays, but three, are concerned with British history.

Following, in this too, a great tradition, Michael Field has composed plays upon subjects from Greece and Rome; but she has most frequently chosen the great chronicles or stories of our own land. In these, she has exercised a free discretion of treatment, caring rather for truth of spirit, and of substance, than of the accidents and of the letter. Thus, in "William Rufus" and in "Canute," historical fact is little altered; but, as the dramatist tells us, it was the sight of the New Forest and of the Eastern Fens, that largely helped to inspire and to mould those tragedies of the Norman, the Saxon, and the Dane. The poet, no less than the Platonic philosopher, should be "a spectator of all time and of all existence"; and art is independent of social and national limits; but a poet is under no prohibition against patriotism; and to write historical plays, fine in art and fine in feeling, is to do good service for his country.

LIONEL JOHNSON.

Michael Field has since published "Attila, my Attila," a play (1896); "Fair Rosamund," a drama (1897); "The World at Auction," a play (1898); "Anna Ruina," a drama (1899); "Noontide Branches," a drama, privately printed (1899); "The Race of Leaves," a play in verse (1901); "Julia Donna," a play (1903), and other works. It is no longer a secret that the *nom-de-plume* "Michael Field" for years concealed the identity of two ladies writing in collaboration—Miss Bradley and Miss Cooper.

CALLIRHOË.

1884.

MICHAEL FIELD.

MACHAON AND THE FAUN.

(ACT III., SCENE VI.)

A Plot of Grass in a Wood.

[FAUN *dancing and singing.*]

Faun. I DANCE and dance! Another faun,
A black one, dances on the lawn.
He moves with me, and when I lift
My heels, his feet directly shift.
I can't out-dance him, though I try;
He dances nimbler than I.
I toss my head, and so does he;
What tricks he dares to play on me!
I touch the ivy in my hair;
Ivy he has and finger there.
The spiteful thing to mock me so!
I will outdance him! Ho! ho! ho!

Machaon [*behind the trees*]. A sight to shake the stiffest sides on earth!
'Twould force a misanthrope to hang a smile
Upon his lip, as dew-drop on a thorn.
Plutus beholding this would fill with noise
Of laughter all the hollow of his voice,
So exquisitely laughable it is.
'Tis one of nature's jokes she's mistress of.
The little fool
Tries to outcaper his own shadow. Ha!
With what a pettish energy he springs,
His forelock nodding to his sportive heels.
Thus man toils oft for the Impossible,
With earnest foolishness and sorry end.
But here's a jocund close to hopeless toil!

He's lying all a-grin because he lies
Upon his shadow, which he reckons caught.
Ha! ha! The very sediments of mirth
Are stirred throughout my nature. This gay knave
I'll question. [*Parting the trees.*

Faun. Ha! ha! ha!

Machaon. What have you caught?
Something philosophers themselves can't seize
With all their definitions. We'll revere
One who has caught himself, and at his feet
Sit like small scholars. [FAUN *offers to run away.*
Nay, you shall not go!
I'll make you talk first. You're a funny thing!

Faun. Oh, let me go! I'll bite! Oh, let me go!

Machaon. A natural philosopher, I see,
Apt with his mouth. I want to hear you talk.
For lies you are not keen enough. Methinks
The innocence of truth hath never fled
This simple mouth, though like a nested bird
It soon gets feathers, and betakes itself
Even from infant lips. Come, sit you down.

Faun. No! no!

Machaon. Down with you. Why, you're on the shade
That danced with you. He's under you! Sit firm!
There's my good knave; you see I mean no harm;
And when you've told me all I want to hear,
Then dance away within the sun again!

Faun. I will not dance.

Machaon. No sulks; I'll have no sulks.
Come, tell me what you are, whether a boy
Or but a boyish creature.

Faun. I'm a faun.

Machaon. And what is that?

Faun. Why, 'tis a faun

Machaon. Just so.
But then you're not a boy?
Faun. I am a faun.
Machaon. His slow conception blocks my questions up.
Well, can you tell me how you were begot?
Dropt from the womb of Nature, I should say;
Or had you once a mother?
Faun. I'm a faun.
Machaon. A truism, my rustic sage! But how
Did you become a faun?—I'll try plain phrase.—
Cannot you tell
Aught of your childhood,—of the time, I mean,
When you were smaller?
Faun. Oh, I danced as now,
And crushed the acorn-cups, and ran the deer,
Sucked the ripe mulberries, tossed the chestnuts up,
As I do now, and . . .
Machaon. Yes, I understand.
—O Eloquence, the tongue of Love, appeal
To cherished memories of simple things,
And thou art on the silliest of lips
That never move to reason!—Then you've lived
Your life in woods; or is this very wood
Its one green limit?
Faun. Once I found the trees
Grow few, so few, like hyacinths in June,
Which made me very sorry; then, I saw
Grass without any shade on which I ran.
But then did I grow frightened, for I'm sure
The shade cares for me, and will keep me safe.
And I ran back.
Machaon. Poor little fool! I shrink
Thus from a new aspect of life, before
Unknown. I cannot run away, like you,
To shades of ignorance to hide amaze.

Have you got any human qualities?
Speak, are you quite inhuman?
Faun. I'm a faun.
Machaon. Like all the world, he doth repeat himself,
Making an adage stuff the holes of thought.
Yet I'm too rough, through grief's ill-timed assault.
You dance and talk, both actions of the man,
And yet there's something in you I can't fit
Into humanity. I can't tell what.
Faun [*offering to jump up*]. Now I may go!
Machaon. Stop! Tell me, can you love?
Faun. I love Coresus.
Machaon. Ah! and you love him!
What do you know of him?
Faun. He's kind to me.
Machaon. The knowledge of a brute. I hoped for mor
What! from this simpleton.—He loved your wood?
Faun. He loves it, and he often plays with me, . . .
Machaon. How dull are the unfearing to suspect!
Faun. And bends the bough of the high fir for reach
Of my hand wanting cones, and then he strokes
The smooth back of a deer, and binds its neck
With ivy-leaves, at which, oh, how I laugh!
And then he laughs, and then I clap my hands.
Machaon. Hast thou seen any in the woods to-day?
Faun. Two, with their noses on a mossy root,
That looked at me, and . . .
Machaon. I meant any man.
Hast thou seen man or maiden in these glades?
Faun. No! no! He has not come so long a time.
When will he come again?
Machaon. No more, no more
—I'd better spell the manuscript of Death
To these untutored ears. This ignorance
So blessèd in the present may afflict

The future, with its wonder unallayed,
That growing drearily, at last becomes
The brutish misery that never knows.
—He's dead.
Faun. Does that mean that he's angry with me?
Oh, I'll be good,
If he will come again, and not be *dead*!
Machaon. He'll melt my manhood! It is strange, most strange;
The tongue of knowledge wags with sounding phrase:
Set ignorance to question, and it straight
Declines to lisping. I am childish-mouthed
Before this unschooled creature.—Come to me.
You will not? Nay, but I must have you near
If I'm to tell you what we mean by *dead*.
—I make too solemn preparations,
(Oh, cruel priestcraft of my tender dread!)
He's frightened. Brevity but cuts the flesh
Of our anxieties; prolixity
Tears it. So I'll be brief.—
You said that you were sorry when in June
The hyacinths drop away?
Faun. Yes.
Machaon. When they're gone.
You cannot get them back again?
Faun. I can.
Not for a while, but then their streaky buds
Shoot up, and soon they're all with me again.
Machaon. Ah! I must give a better rendering
From Death's old bone-grey parchment.—Right, you're right!
The hyacinths blue the ground spring after spring,
Although with different flowers from those you bunched
In grasp too small last year. For oft your hands
Are greedy with the flowers?
Faun No, for they look

Long-faced and tired, and do not smile at me
As when they stick straight up out of the ground.
Machaon. A thread to guide me, through the labyrinth
Of his simplicity and ignorance,
To the mid-chamber, dark and windowless,
Where understanding lies! The tired flowers
Grow ugly, lose
All likeness to the bells you jerked about
So merrily when they were purple?
Faun. Yes.
When they grow tired, I lay them on the grass;
I love to lie upon the grass when tired,
And then they go.
Machaon. That going I call Death.
Faun. But then they come again, quite fresh and gay.
But I am tired, tired, tired!
Machaon. The thread is snapt, the labyrinthine way
Blocked up with duiness.—Yet you want to know
Wherefore Coresus cannot play with you?
Faun. Oh yes!
Machaon. Then tell me, did you ever love
One deer above the rest?
Faun. Oh yes!
Machaon. —His yawn
Is to my heart's pain most medicinal.
Tire often blunts the edge of sorrow's sword.—
And did it ever cease to follow you?
Faun. One day it followed; then lay down; then up
It got, and followed as I ran before.
At last it lay, and would not stir, for all
I tickled its soft skin with chestnut-leaves.
It lay, and . . .
Machaon. It was *dead*!
Faun [*shuddering*]. It grew a heap
More nasty than an ant-hill, for it smelt!

Machaon. He knows the alphabet of Death: my task
To make the grim idea creep through the signs
As snake through blades of grass. Yes, I must form
The sentence of man's doom, and teach to him.
Faun. I hate the wood about it; never dance,
Or even go there.
Machaon. It was *dead.*
Faun. Perhaps
It's right again; I never go to see.
Machaon. I tell you it was *dead.*
Faun. Then it *was* dead.
Machaon. How shall I lift the lid of his mind's chest,
And empty it of Hope's sweet silver form
That's been its tenant and glad prisoner?—
Coresus thus is dead:
Just like your deer; dead, dead, just like your deer.
—He's all a-tremble; yet his frightened thought
Still dares a vain resistance, like a girl
Who whips the captor's arms. Ah me, ah me!
I dare not comfort him while still he doubts;
Silence is unbelief's best battle-field.—
Faun [*in a whisper*]. And is he brown and nasty, like the deer?
Machaon. I can't pollute his memory with *Yes!*
No, no. But he can talk no more, nor move,
Nor ever come to play with you again.
Faun. He'll come with the next hyacinths!
Machaon. No, no!
You never, never will be with him more,
Or play with him again.
Faun. Oh-o-h-h!
Machaon. Belief
At last fills up the doorway of his doubt.—
My boy!—A sob is coming, and the face

Looks older now its lines of joy are bent
To sorrow's converse will.
[FAUN *rolls on the grass and sobs.*
Nay, do not cry.
Look, here's a cone. I'll pick you cones, and play.
—O Death, how like a cruel step-mother,
You always put your spite in every joy!
You've torn a great hole in the happiness
Of this quiet happy creature, which no stitch
Of Time will mend completely.
Faun. Dead, dead, dead!
Coresus, don't be dead!
Machaon. I've got a cone;
I'll give it you. There! try to love me, boy!
Faun. Coresus dead! Oh, oh! Dead like the deer.
The horrid deer that lay and smelt! Oh, oh!
Coresus dead like that?
Machaon. You'll love me?
Faun. No.
Perhaps the deer's all right! I'll see! I'll see!
For then Coresus will be all right too! [*Exit.*
Machaon. Go, have thy foolish way. Thy tears are dry
I will not raise their flood-gate for the world.
Deception is the ivy of the mind:
I've cut
Its roots at his small brain, and it may hang
Greenly about it for a little while
Before it withers. I must budge, must hence.
Poor youngster! Here's the very place his back
Made in the moss. Would he could lie and laugh
The shadow o' Death uncaught! So Truth can curse:
I thought not it could put its sacred tongue
To such a use. Heigh-ho! From this time forth
He'll have a different laugh. I must be gone! [*Exit.*

CANUTE THE GREAT.

1887.

MICHAEL FIELD.

CANUTE AND GUNHILD.

(FROM ACT I., SCENE IV.)

Re-enter HARDEGON *with* GUNHILD.

Hardegon. At his learning!
Deal with him, spare him not.
Canute. Whom hast thou brought?
A brooding face, with windy sea of hair,
And eyes whose ample vision ebbs no more
Than waters from a fiord. I conceive
A dread of things familiar as she breathes.
Gunhild. O king.
Canute. Ay, Scandinavia.
Gunhild. He sees
How with a country's might I cross his door;
How in me all his youth was spent, in me
His ancestors are buried; on my brows
Inscribed is his religion; through my frame
Press the great, goading forces of the waves.
Canute. Art thou a woman?
Gunhild. Not to thee. I am
Thy past.
Canute. Her arms are knotted in her bosom
Like ivy-stems. What does she here, so fixed
Before my seat?
Gunhild. Harken! I wandered out
Among the break-fern, and the upright flags,
And snatching brambles, when the sun was gone,
And the west yellow underneath the night.

A fir-bough rolled its mass athwart my way,
With a black fowl thereon. All eve I stood
And gathered in your fate. You raise your hands
To other gods, you speak another tongue
You learn strange things on which is Odin's seal
That men should know them not, you cast the billows
Behind your back, and leap upon the horse.
You love no more the North that fashioned you,
The ancestors whose blood is in your heart:—
These things you have forgotten.

Canute. Yes.

Gunhild. But they
Will have a longer memory. Alas,
The mournfulness that draws about my breasts!
Woe, woe! There is a justice of the Norn,
Who sings about the cradle.

Canute. Speak thy worst.

[*Aside, rising and pacing apart.*] How different my queen! How liberal
The splendour of her smile! This woman's frown
Is tyrannous. So will my country look,
When I sail back next year; for I shall feel
A dread, a disappointment, and a love
I loathe, it comes up from so deep a well,
Where I am sod and darkness

Gunhild. At thy birth
Sang Urd of foregone things, of thy wild race,
Of rocks and fir-trees that for ages past
Stood in thy native bounds, of creeping seas,
That call thy countrymen to journey forth
Among strange people; and her song went on
As flesh was woven for thee in the womb;
It cannot be forgotten, for she sang
Beginnings.

Canute. O grey-headed tyrannies
Of yore, I will escape you.
Gunhild. Verily,
They have requital. Thou wilt get a child:
Will it not draw from the deep parts of life;
Will it not take of thee that disposition,
Old as the hills, and as the waterfall,
Whose foam alone was ever seen by man?
Thou wilt produce a being of thy past,
And all thy change avail not.
Hardegon. How these women
Can sing foundations!
Canute. If in those I breed
It work no blessing, to myself this new,
Unsettled energy within my brain
Is worth all odds. I cannot understand
Half that is meeting me. Go hence, your face
Is sheer confusion to me; it brings back
The load of ignorance, the brutishness,
The fetters of nativity.
Gunhild. I go:
But wrathful leave behind me what was told
When the crow bent from the swirled plume of fir,
And held me like a statue.
Canute. O my past,
I loved thine aspect once, but now my mind
Drives thee away. It seems to me that thought
Is as a moving on along the air—
I cannot yet find language. You oppress,
And hinder me; but when I brood alone,
Hope stirs, and there is tumult of a joy,
That flashes through my nature, like a sword,
Cutting the knots.
Gunhild. Oh, indestructible

Are the first bonds of living. Fare thee well.
Thou wilt engender thine own ancestry;
Nature will have her permanence.
Canute. And I
Will have my impulse.
Gunhild. Oh, the blue fir-bough,
The bird, the fern, and iris at my feet!
The whole world talks of birth, it is the secret
That shudders through all sap [*Exit.*
Canute. She turns away
With rigid shoulders, and is vanishing
For ever. 'Tis in wrestles with her like
We are transformed.
[*To* HARDEGON.] Call Edric, do you hear!
And say no other word as you would live;
My temper will not bear it. [*Exit* HARDEGON.]

THE TRAGIC MARY.

1890.

MICHAEL FIELD.

(ACT IV., SCENE V.)

BOTHWELL'S SOLILOQUY.

(BOTHWELL *rises and stands straight up without the least motion.*)

Bothwell. THIS woman! Somewhere she has
pledged my soul;
We have drunk wine together on some bare,
Brown hill of chaos, while the wanton lights,
Young meteors flaming lawless through the heaven
Peered at our rampant revel. We were one
Before the stars were broken to their spheres;
Part of the huge, unsevered element
When day and darkness hugged. I know that far
Below the rise of rivers, underneath
The sowing of the mine's unfathomed seed,
There was this sunken bond. She flings me now
Contempt, my lass! my lass! What should we find
In woman but the lavish side of God,
Before the thought of judgment crippled Him,
When He was soft, creative, fostering, free?
Contempt, contempt! Night's stinging moments spin,
And stir me to an act: the regicides
With their dismaying weapons shall have done
By far less intimate irreverence
On majesty than I in person dare.
Hell will be puzzled what to do with such
As I shall show myself, it has no code
That can entangle me, no quarter builded

That might immure my unimagined courage,
No flames to equal mine. The royal witch,
She sought to disenchant me in the guise
Of formal coldness, she the beauty, she
The madding, unfoiled beauty. How the air
Dreads me, I breathe on lion-like! She has said
She needs no convoy! I will furnish one:
She must with me the merry, downward way,
Where demons cackle. I will meet my bride
At Foulsbrigg with an army. This contempt
Is an infectious plague! [*Exit by outside door.*

MICHAEL FIELD.

I.—A SUMMER WIND.

O WIND, thou hast thy kingdom in the trees,
And all thy royalties
Sweep through the land to-day.
It is mid June,
And thou, with all thy instruments in tune,
Thine orchestra
Of heaving fields and heavy swinging fir,
Strikest a lay
That doth rehearse
Her ancient freedom to the universe.
All other sound in awe
Repeats its law:
The bird is mute; the sea
Sucks up its waves; from rain
The burthened clouds refrain,
To listen to thee in thy leafery,
Thou unconfined,
Lavish, large, soothing, refluent summer wind.

II.—BELOVED.

MORTAL, if thou art beloved
Life's offences are removed;
All the fateful things that checked thee,
Hearten, hallow, and protect thee.
Grow'st thou mellow? What is age?
Tinct on life's illumined page,
Where the purple letters glow
Deeper, painted long ago.

What is sorrow? Comfort's prime,
Love's choice Indian summer clime.
Sickness!—thou wilt pray it worse
For so blessed, balmy nurse.
And for death! when thou art dying
'Twill be Love beside thee lying.
Death is lonesome? Oh, how brave
Shows the foot-frequented grave!
Heaven itself is but the casket
For Love's treasure, ere he ask it,—
Ere with burning heart he follow,
Piercing through corruption's hollow.
If thou art beloved, oh then
Fear no grief from mortal men.

III.—YEA, GOLD IS SON OF ZEUS.

(From "Long Ago," xxxvi.)

Yea, gold is son of Zeus: no rust
  Its timeless light can stain;
The worm that brings man's flesh to dūst
  Assaults its strength in vain:
More gold than gold the love I sing,
A hard, inviolable thing.

Men say the passions should grow old
  With waning years; my heart
Is incorruptible as gold,
  'Tis my immortal part:
Nor is there any god can lay
On love the finger of decay.

Alice Meynell.

Alice C. Meynell is the younger of two daughters of the late Mr. T. J. Thompson, her elder sister (now Lady Butler) being the distinguished painter of "The Roll Call," and other remarkable pictures of military life and action. Mr. Thompson's name is familiar to all readers of Forster's "Life of Charles Dickens" as that of one of the great novelist's most intimate friends; and his daughters in their childhood and youth were provided not merely with the ordinary acquirements of an adequate home education, but with those ampler and subtler aids to a large culture, given by sojourn and residence among the historic sites and art centres of the continent. In Miss Alice Thompson the intellectual and the spiritual instincts seem to have awakened early and simultaneously. While engaged in the writing of her girlish verses she was also pondering the problems which never lose their power of appeal to earnest spirits, and the result of her pondering was that while still a girl she was received into the Roman Catholic Church, into which the young convert was followed by the elder members of her family. In the year 1875 Miss Alice Thompson published the volume entitled "Preludes," illustrated by her sister's drawings. The material success of the slender book was greater than that

attained by the maiden efforts of most young and unknown poets; but its true success was that made manifest by the verdicts of the few who spoke not as irresponsible reviewing scribes, but as men having authority. Mr. Ruskin wrote emphatically, "The last verse of that perfectly heavenly 'Letter from a Girl to her own old age,' the whole of 'San Lorenzo's Mother,' and the end of the sonnet, 'To a Daisy,' are the finest things I have yet seen or felt in modern verse." Nor was the praise of poets wanting. "A most genuine little book of poems, containing sonnets of true spiritual beauty. I must send it to you," wrote Dante Rossetti to Mr. Hall Caine, who adds: "He took to it vastly." He knew by heart, and was fond of repeating the "Renunciation" sonnet, which, according to Mr. William Sharp, he ranked as one of the three finest sonnets written by women. "The little book," again Rossetti wrote, "is all deep-hearted speech. Besides being beautiful, it is equal almost throughout, and full of artistic charm." Mr. Browning, after reading in an indifferent notice some extracts from the poems, "conceived the desire to read the rest for myself," which he did "with real pleasure," being "struck by their beauty," he tells us, "even beyond what the indifference of the reviewer should have prepared me for." Mr. Aubrey de Vere—the friend of Wordsworth—was the young poet's earliest intimate acquaintance among men of letters, and by him she was introduced to Mr. Coventry Patmore and Lord Tennyson. In 1877 Miss Alice Thompson was married to Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, the editor of the *Weekly Register* and *Merry England*.

During the years which have elapsed since her

marriage, Mrs. Meynell has uttered her thought and vision in various forms—chiefly in essay writing, which, by reason of the constructive imagination always to be found in it, has a certain creative quality, but of her singing voice she has been all too frugal; and though she has from time to time during the decade of 1880-90, contributed to ephemeral literature some brief strain of penetrating music, these later melodies remain uncollected, and her place in the Victorian choir has, practically, to be determined by the poems of her early maidenhood which compose the volume of "Preludes." There are few living poets who would suffer less than Mrs. Meynell from a provisional estimate based exclusively on adolescent performances. Of what is ordinarily called crudity—the quality of artistic work in which the power of adequate execution lags behind the power of inspiring conception—there is hardly any trace whatever, even in those poems which we may guess to be of earliest date. There is, indeed, a marked prevalence of maturity, and we miss it only in a very few poems where the singing, so to speak, dominates, and tends to overpower the song,—that is, where the instinctive lyrical impulse is not reinforced by a sufficient body of thought or emotion, and where, consequently, the momentum of the motive is more or less exhausted prior to the exhaustion of the singing impulse itself. Elsewhere than in these infrequent pages, Mrs. Meynell's verse recalls the memorable passage in which Mr. Pater speaks of poetry and all other representative arts as aspiring towards the condition of music, in which the distinction between matter and form, between the thing expressed and the manner of its artistic

expression, is all but obliterated; that is, it is work in which the informing thought, emotion, or sentiment is not clothed in an imaginative vesture, but rather incarnated in an imaginative body, from the life of which its own life is inseparable. The motives of her poems are neither obvious nor far-fetched; they never quite lack the charm of things familiar, and yet they always possess the charm of things that are new, not with the novelty of inherent strangeness, but with the finer, rarer novelty of strongly individualised apprehension and presentation. In her landscape the poet sees what we ourselves have seen, but sees it with a difference that at once recalls and supplements our own remembrance; in her moods of emotion or reflection she feels and thinks as we may have thought or felt, and yet by the imaginative individuality of the thinking or feeling gives to the utterance of it a certain uniqueness which touches us to delightful surprise. Here and there, as in "A Young Convert," "A Meditation," or "A Letter from a Young Girl to her own old age" the mere burden of the poem has a separate interest and impressiveness of its own, but the special character of her work is given to it by that perfect co-ordination of body and spirit always found in either picture or poem, which is of imagination all compact. Greater poets than Mrs. Meynell are still with us,—greatness is not the word suggested by her winning achievement; but few of our generation have exhibited in more finely balanced harmony the qualities in virtue of which essential poetry is what it is.

JAMES ASHCROFT NOBLE.

Mrs. Meynell published "Later Poems" (1901).

PRELUDES.

1875.

ALICE C. MEYNELL.

I.—SAN LORENZO GIUSTINIANI'S MOTHER.

"And we the shadows of the dream."—SHELLEY.

I HAD not seen my son's dear face
(He chose the cloister by God's grace)
Since it had come to full flower-time.
I hardly guessed at its perfect prime,
That folded flower of his dear face.

Mine eyes were veiled by mists of tears
When on a day in many years
One of his order came. I thrilled
Facing, I thought, that face fulfilled.
I doubted, for my mists of tears.

His blessing be with me for ever!
My hope and doubt were hard to sever.
—That altered face, those holy weeds.
I filled his wallet and kissed his beads,
And lost his echoing feet for ever.

If to my son my alms were given
I know not, and I wait for Heaven.
He did not plead for child of mine,
But for another Child divine,
And unto Him it was surely given.

There is one alone who cannot change;
Dreams are we, shadows, visions strange;
And all I give is given to one.
I might mistake my dearest son,
But never the Son who cannot change.

II.—BUILDERS OF RUINS.

WE build with strength the deep tower-wall
That shall be shattered thus and thus.
And fair and great are court and hall,
But *how* fair—this is not for us,
Who dimly feel the want of all.

We know, we know how all too bright
All hues of ours though dimmed through tears,
And how the marble gleams too white;—
We speak in unknown tongues, the years
Interpret everything aright,

And crown with weeds our pride of towers,
And warm our marble through with sun,
And break our pavements through with flowers,
With an Amen when all is done,
Knowing these perfect things of ours.

O days, we ponder, left alone,
Like children in their lonely hour,
And in our secrets keep your own,
As seeds the colour of the flower.
To-day they are not all unknown,

The stars that 'twixt the rise and fall,
Like relic-seers, shall one by one
Stand musing o'er our empty hall;
And setting moons shall brood upon
The frescoes of our inward wall.

And when some midsummer shall be,
Hither will come some little one
(Dusty with bloom of flowers is he),
Sit on a ruin i' the late long sun,
And think, one foot upon his knee.

And where they wrought, these lives of ours,
So many-worded, many-souled,
A North-west wind will take the towers,
And dark with colour, sunny and cold,
Will range alone among the flowers.

And here or there, at our desire,
The little clamorous owl shall sit
Through her still time; and we aspire
To make a law (and know not it)
Unto the life of a wild briar.

We have a perfect purpose, dear,
Though from our consciousness 'tis hidden.
Thou, time to come, shalt make it clear,
Undoing our work; we are children chidden
With pity, and smiles of many a year.

Who shall allot the praise, and guess
What part is yours and what is ours?—
O years that certainly will bless
Our flowers with fruits, our seeds with flowers,
With ruin all our perfectness.

Be patient, Time, of our delays,
Too happy hopes, and wasted fears,
Our faithful ways, our wilful ways.
Solace our labours, O our seers
The seasons, and our bards the days;

And make our pause and silence brim
With the shrill children's play, and sweets
Of those pathetic flowers and dim,
Of those eternal flowers my Keats
Dying felt growing over him.

III.—IN EARLY SPRING.

"L'océan connu, l'âme reste à sonder."—VICTOR HUGO

O SPRING, I know thee! Seek for sweet surprise
In the young children's eyes.
But I have learnt the years, and know the yet
Leaf-folded violet.
Mine ear, awake to silence, can fortell
The cuckoo's fitful bell.
I wander in a grey time that encloses
June and the wild hedge-roses.
A year's procession of the flowers doth pass
My feet, along the grass.
And all you sweet birds silent yet, I know
The notes that stir you so,
Your songs yet half devised in the dim dear
Beginnings of the year.
In these young days you meditate your part;
I have it all by heart.
I know the secrets of the seeds of flowers
Hidden, and warm with showers,
And how, in kindling Spring, the cuckoo shall
Alter his interval.
But not a flower or song I ponder is
My own, but memory's.
I shall be silent in those days desired
Before a world inspired.
O dear brown birds, compose your old song-phrases,
Earth, thy familiar daisies.

The poet mused upon the dusky height,
Between the stars towards night,
His purpose in his heart. I watched, a space,
The meaning of his face;

There was the secret, fled from earth and skies,
Hid in his grey young eyes.
My heart and all the Summer wait his choice,
And wonder for his voice.
Who shall foretell his songs, and who aspire
But to divine his lyre?
Sweet earth, we know thy dimmest mysteries,
But he is lord of his.

IV.—PARTED.

"Come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona."—DANTE.

FAREWELL to one now silenced quite,
Sent out of hearing, out of sight,—
My friend of friends, whom I shall miss.
He is not banished, though, for this,—
Nor he, nor sadness, nor delight.

Though I shall walk with him no more,
A low voice sounds upon the shore.
He must not watch my resting-place
But who shall drive a mournful face
From the sad winds about my door?

I shall not hear his voice complain,
But who shall stop the patient rain?
His tears must not disturb my heart,
But who shall change the years, and part
The world from every thought of pain?

Although my life is left so dim,
The morning crowns the mountain-brim;
Joy is not gone from summer skies,
Nor innocence from children's eyes,
And all these things are part of him.

He is not banished, for the showers
Yet wake this green warm earth of ours.
How can the summer but be sweet?
I shall not have him at my feet,
And yet my feet are on the flowers.

V.—TO THE BELOVED DEAD.

A Lament.

BELOVED, thou art like a tune that idle fingers
Play on a window-pane.
The time is there, the form of music lingers;
But O thou sweetest strain,
Where is thy soul? Thou liest i' the wind and rain.

Even as to him who plays that idle air,
It seems a melody,
For his own soul is full of it, so, my Fair,
Dead, thou dost live in me,
And all this lonely soul is full of thee.

Thou song of songs!—not music as before
Unto the outward ear;
My spirit sings thee inly evermore,
Thy falls with tear on tear.
I fail for thee, thou art too sweet, too dear.

Thou silent song, thou ever voiceless rhyme,
Is there no pulse to move thee,
At windy dawn, with a wild heart beating time,
And falling tears above thee,
O music stifled from the ears that love thee?

Oh, for a strain of thee from outer air!
Soul wearies soul, I find.
Of thee, thee, thee, I am mournfully aware,
—Contained in one poor mind,
Who wert in tune and time to every wind.

Poor grave, poor lost belovèd! but I burn
For some more vast To be.
As he that played that bootless tune may turn
And strike it on a lyre triumphantly,
I wait some future, all one lyre for thee.

VI.—A LETTER FROM A GIRL TO HER OWN OLD AGE.

"Lete vedrai."—DANTE.

LISTEN, and when thy hand this paper presses,
O time-worn woman, think of her who blesses
What thy thin fingers touch, with her caresses.

O mother, for a weight of years do break thee!
O daughter, for slow time must yet awake thee,
And from the changes of my heart must make thee.

O fainting traveller, morn is grey in heaven.
Dost thou remember how the clouds were driven?
And are they calm about the fall of even?

Pause near the ending of thy long migration,
For this one sudden hour of desolation
Appeals to one hour of thy meditation.

Suffer, O silent one, that I remind thee
Of the great hills that storm the sky behind thee,
Of the wild winds of power that have resigned thee.

Know that the mournful plain where thou must wander,
Is but a grey and silent world, but ponder
The misty mountains of the morning yonder.

Listen; the mountain winds with rain were fretting,
And sudden gleams the mountain-tops besetting.
I cannot let thee fade to death, forgetting.

What part of this wild heart of mine I know not
Will follow with thee where the great winds blow not,
And where the young flowers of the mountain grow not.

Yet let my letter with thy lost thoughts in it
Tell what the way was when thou didst begin it,
And win with thee the goal when thou shalt win it.

Oh, in some hour of thine my thoughts shall guide thee.
Suddenly, though time, darkness, silence hide thee,
This wind from thy lost country flits beside thee;

Telling thee: all thy memories moved the maiden,
With thy regrets was morning over-shaden,
With sorrow thou hast left, her life was laden.

But whither shall my thoughts turn to pursue thee?
Life changes, and the years and days renew thee.
Oh, Nature brings my straying heart unto thee.

Her winds will join us, with their constant kisses
Upon the evening as the morning tresses,
Her summers breathe the same unchanging blisses.

And we, so altered in our shifting phases,
Track one another 'mid the many mazes
By the eternal child-breath of the daisies.

I have not writ this letter of divining
To make a glory of thy silent pining,
A triumph of thy mute and strange declining.

Only one youth, and the bright life was shrouded.
Only one morning, and the day was clouded.
And one old age with all regrets is crowded.

Oh, hush; oh, hush! Thy tears my words are steeping.
Oh, hush, hush, hush! So full, the fount of weeping?
Poor eyes, so quickly moved, so near to sleeping?

Pardon the girl; such strange desires beset her.
Poor woman, lay aside the mournful letter
That breaks thy heart; the one that wrote, forget her

The one that now thy faded features guesses,
With filial fingers thy grey hair caresses,
With morning tears thy mournful twilight blesses.

VII.—AN UNMARKED FESTIVAL.

"Benedetto sia'l giorno e'l mese e l'anno."—PETRARCA.

THERE'S a feast, undated, yet
Both our true lives hold it fast,—
The first day we ever met.
What a great day came and passed!
—Unknown then, but known at last.

And we met; you knew not me,
Mistress of your joys and fears;
Held my hand that held the key
Of the treasure of your years,
Of the fountain of your tears.

For you knew not it was I,
And I knew not it was you.
We have learnt, as days went by.
But a flower struck root and grew
Underground, and no one knew.

Day of days! Unmarked it rose,
In whose hours we were to meet,
And forgotten passed. Who knows,
Was earth cold, or sunny, sweet,
At the coming of your feet?

One mere day, we thought; the measure
Of such days the year fulfils.
Now, how dearly would we treasure
Something from its fields, its rills,
And its memorable hills;

—But one leaf of oak or lime,
Or one blossom from its bowers
No one gathered at the time.
Oh, to keep that day of ours
By one relic of its flowers!

VIII.—SONG.

AS the inhastening tide doth roll,
Dear and desired, upon the whole
Long shining strand, and floods the caves,
Your love comes filling with happy waves
The open sea-shore of my soul.

But inland from the seaward spaces,
None knows, not even you, the places
Brimmed, at your coming, out of sight,
—The little solitudes of delight
This tide constrains in dim embraces.

You see the happy shore, wave-rimmed,
But know not of the quiet dimmed
Rivers your coming floods and fills,
The little pools 'mid happier hills,
My silent rivulets, over-brimmed.

What, I have secrets from you? Yes.
But O my Sea, your love doth press
And reach in further than you know,
And fills all these; and when you go
There's loneliness in loneliness.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ALICE C. MEYNELL.

I.—THE MODERN POET.

A Song of Derivations.

I COME from nothing: but from where
Come the undying thoughts I bear?
Down through long links of death and birth
From the past poets of the earth.
My immortality is there.

I am like the blossom of an hour;
But long long vanished sun and shower
Awoke my breath in the young world's air.
I track the past back everywhere,
Through seed and flower, and seed and flower.

Or I am like a stream that flows
Full of the cold springs that arose
In morning lands, in distant hills;
And down the plain my channel fills
With melting of forgotten snows.

Voices I have not heard possessed
My own fresh songs; my thoughts are blessed
With relics of the far unknown;
And, mixed with memories not my own,
The sweet streams throng into my breast.

Before this life began to be,
The happy songs that wake in me
Woke long ago and far apart.
Heavily on this little heart
Presses this immortality.

II.—MY HEART SHALL BE THY GARDEN.

"Questo ne' patti nostri, Amor, non era."
LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

MY heart shall be thy garden. Come, my own,
Into thy garden; thine be happy hours
Among my fairest thoughts, my tallest flowers,
From root to crowning petal, thine alone.

Thine is the place from where the seeds are sown
Up to the sky enclosed, with all its showers.
But ah, the birds, the birds! Who shall build bowers
To keep these thine? O friend, the birds have flown.

For as these come and go, and quit our pine
To follow the sweet season, or, new-comers,
Sing one song only from our alder-trees,

My heart has thoughts, which, though thine eyes hold mi
Flit to the silent world and other summers,
With wings that dip beyond the silver seas.

III.—RENOUNCEMENT.

I MUST not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the love that lurks in all delight—
The love of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the dearest passage of a song.
Oh, just beyond the sweetest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet brigl
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I need must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

Annie Matheson.

1853.

It is some distinction for a modern poet to attain to the publication of a second volume of verse, and when a writer of poetry has found a public for three or four volumes, a somewhat unusual result has been achieved. When the verse is of a character which is not in a broad sense of the word popular, the success is the more marked.

Annie Matheson's several volumes followed each other through the last decade of the century. "Religion of Humanity,and Other Poems" (1890) impressed those able to discriminate by its earnestness of purpose, nobility of thought, and distinction of style and form— "Memory's Song" (p. 334) being selected for special praise for its simplicity and pathos. "Love's Music" (1894) displayed the same humanitarian and philosophic qualities, and included some graceful lyrics, of which "An April Song" and "A Christmas Lyric" may be mentioned.

"Love Triumphant" (1898) shows a distinct advance in freedom of utterance and command of technique. The title poem was suggested by the picture by Sir E. Burne Jones, and the volume includes: "The Great Commoner," an ode to the memory of Gladstone; one to Robert Browning; and one, "The Year of Rejoicing," to the "Empress Mother"; besides a number of other fine poems. Of the lyrics, one entitled "Love" follows:

> Oh, what is love? a hope, a dream?
> The secret source of upward strife!
> The pain that will from death redeem—
> The life of life!

A bliss in agony; at last,
As One Whose Name is Love has willed,
The peace that comes when storm is past
Through faith fulfilled.

At first, the waking throes of birth,
A quickening goad, a smiting rod;
At last, the crowning grace of earth,
The restful ecstasy of God!

The following poem, entitled "The Mist," has also been cited as one of the successes of this volume:

The sun and the dew were so far apart,
The world would have said they could never have met,
But the sun looked down with a burning heart
When the earth with the crystal dew was wet;
So the dew went up in a golden mist—
And they kist,
Till the dew came back at the close of day,
In a robe of the colour of amethyst,—
And a crown of pearls on the green earth lay,
Like tears of hope and of wild regret
That told of an unforgotten tryst,
Ere the sun had set.

"Selected Poems, Old and New" (1900) gathered the best of the shorter poems from the preceding volumes, and presented them, with some more recently written, in convenient form Of the quality of these the following pages will testify.

Annie Matheson was born at Blackheath, in 1853, the daughter of the late Rev. James Matheson, of Nottingham, and was privately educated. She wrote an introduction to "John Halifax," in Methuen's "Little Library," and a critical note to "Adam Bede," and to "Silas Marner," in the Temple Classic Series; and has continually contributed to literary journalism.

ALFRED H. MILES.

ANNIE MATHESON.

I.—A SONG FOR WOMEN.

WITHIN a dreary narrow room
That looks upon a noisome street,
Half fainting with the stifling heat,
A starving girl works out her doom.
Yet not the less in God's sweet air
The little birds sing, free of care,
And hawthorns blossom everywhere.

Swift, ceaseless toil scarce wins her bread:
From early dawn till twilight falls,
Shut in by four dull, ugly walls,
The hours crawl round with murderous tread.
And all the while, in some still place,
Where intertwining boughs embrace,
The blackbirds build, time flies apace.

With envy of the folk who die,
Who may at last their leisure take,
Whose longed-for sleep none roughly wake,
Tired hands the restless needle ply.
But far and wide in meadows green
The golden buttercups are seen,
And reddening sorrel nods between.

Too pure and proud to soil her soul,
Or stoop to basely-gotten gain,
By days of changeless want and pain
The seamstress earns a prisoner's dole.
While in the peaceful fields the sheep
Feed, quiet; and through heaven's blue deep
The silent cloud-wings stainless sweep.

And if she be alive or dead,
That weary woman scarcely knows;
But back and forth her needle goes
In tune with throbbing heart and head.
Lo, where the leaning alders part,
White-bosomed swallows, blithe of heart,
Above still waters skim and dart.

O God in heaven! shall I, who share
That dying woman's womanhood,
Taste all the summer's bounteous good
Unburdened by her weight of care?
The white moon-daisies star the grass,
The lengthening shadows o'er them pass,
The meadow pool is smooth as glass.

II.—MEMORY'S SONG.

"Causa fuit Pater his."—Hor.

THE earth cast off her snowy shrouds,
And overhead the skies
Looked down between the soft white clouds,
As blue as children's eyes.
"The breath of Spring was all too sweet," she said,
"Too like the Spring that came ere he was dead."

The grass began to grow that day,
The flowers awoke from sleep;
And round her did the sunbeams play
Till she was fain to weep.
"The light will surely blind my eyes," she said,
"It shines so brightly still, yet he is dead."

The buds grew glossy in the sun
On many a leafless tree,
The little brooks did laugh and run
With most melodious glee.
"O God! they make a jocund noise," she said;
"All things forget him now that he is dead."

The wind had from the almond flung
Red blossoms round her feet,
On hazel-boughs the catkins hung,
The willow-blooms grew sweet.
"Palm willows, fragrant with the Spring," she said,
"He always found the first;—but he is dead."

Right golden was the crocus flame,
And, touched with purest green,
The small white flower of stainless name
Above the ground was seen.
He used to love the white and gold," she said;
"The snowdrops come again, and he is dead."

"I would not wish him back," she cried,
"In this dark world of pain.
For him the joys of life abound,
For me its griefs remain.
I would not wish him back again," she said,
"But Spring is hard to bear now he is dead."

III.—LOVE AND KINDNESS.

A VOICE of pity strove to bless
In accents bountifully kind,
But still my grief knew no redress,
Grown mad and blind.

The presence made herself my slave,
Hither and thither came and went:
All that she had poor Kindness gave,
Till all was spent.

She tried to soothe and make me whole:
Her touch was torment in my pain;
It froze my heart, benumbed my soul,
And crazed my brain.

At last, her duty all fulfilled,
She turned with cheerful ease away,
Yet would have lingered, had I willed
That she should stay.

And lo! there knelt, where she had stood,
One, wistful as a child might be,
Who blushed at her own hardihood
In helping me.

She said no word, she only turned
Her passionate sweet eyes on mine,
Until within my sorrow burned
A bliss divine.

And in that gaze I woke once more
To earth beneath and heaven above—
This was not Kindness, as before,
But only Love.

IV.—SLEEP.

"And all the air a solemn stillness holds."

SOFT silence of the summer night
Alive with wistful murmurings,
Enfold me in thy quiet might:
Shake o'er my head thy slumb'rous wings,
So cool and light:
Let me forget all earthly things
In sleep to-night!

Tired roses, passionately sweet,
Are leaning on their cool green leaves,
The mignonette about my feet
A maze of tangled fragrance weaves,
Where dewdrops meet:
Kind sleep the weary world bereaves
Of noise and heat.

White lilies, pure as falling snow,
And redolent of tenderness,
Are gently swaying to and fro,
Lulled by the breath of evening less
Than by the low
Music of sleepy winds, that bless
The buds that grow.

The air is like a mother's hand
Laid softly on a throbbing brow,
And o'er the darksome, dewy land
The peace of heaven is stealing now.
While, hand in hand,
Young angels tell the flowers how
Their lives are planned.

From yon deep sky the quiet stars
Look down with steadfast eloquence,
And God the prison-door unbars
That held the mute world's inmost sense
From all the wars
Of day's loud hurry and turbulence;
And nothing now the silence mars
Of love intense.

V.—TO A LITTLE CHILD.

CLEAR eyes of heaven's chosen hue
When not a cloud is seen above
To fleck the warm untroubled blue,
A little laughing face of love;

A boundless energy of life
In dimpled arms and rosy feet;
No breath of care, no touch of strife,
Has dulled thy glad heart's rhythmic beat.

So girt about with golden light,
By shadows still so little vexed,
That many a weary anxious wight
Grows in thy presence less perplexed.

Our smiles come at thy fairy beck,
Frowns pass away at thy caress;
When thy soft arms are round my neck
I feel God's wondrous tenderness.

VI.—DEATH AND LIFE.

O DEATH! when all my tasks are done.
And Life has yielded up
The hidden joys that, one by one,
Make sweet his bitter cup,
Then only, at the set of sun,
Come thou with me to sup.

Thou art but Life in brief disguise,
And ere we sup, wilt lay
Thy domino of sombre dyes
Within my tomb away,
Then flash on my delighted eyes
As Life, in Life's array.

That night put no new jewels on,
But wear thy time-worn dress,
No kindlier garment canst thou don,
Nor shall I love thee less—
The hurried air will then be gone
That mars thy loveliness:

Despite the mystery and pain
That blend with love and bliss,
For life hereafter we are fain,
Not wholly unlike this,—
But life more vital, to regain
What we, through weakness, miss.

O Death! I called thee once a friend
Of whom I had no fear:
(Stern Life, on me his brows would bend,
Nor seemed his bidding clear),—
But when I saw thee hither wend,
I knew that Life was dear.

When nearer drew the shrouded face
(Day's work unfinished still),
A terror shadowed all the place,
A prayer possessed my will;
"A little longer grant me grace,
While I my day fulfil!"

I heard a hand unlatch my door,
More solemn grew my dread;
No death-like phantom crossed my floor,
But Life himself instead,
His mocking smile, unseen before,
With shamepast eyes I read.

He smiled: "I did but masquerade
A moment in thy sight,
And wast thou then so sore afraid
Of thy friend, Death, to-night?—
Go, finish what thy labour made,
Nor waste the waning light."

And He at last in Whom I trust,
When death does frown on me,
Will throw the mask into the dust
That I true Life may see,
His garb of joy from moth and rust
Eternally set free.

Familiar Life, but fairer far
Than shone his earthly grace,
Which care and grief and hurry mar,
And bonds of time and space;
Life always where earth's loved ones are,
Before Love's unveiled face.

Ada Bartrick Baker.

1854.

"A PALACE of Dreams, and Other Verse," published in 1901, presented to the public in a collected form a number of poems which had previously attracted attention in the pages of well-known magazines, together with some new poems not previously published. The author, Ada Bartrick Baker, a daughter of Samuel and Louisa Budden, was born at Notting Hill, on the 8th of November, 1854, but much of her early life was spent in a pretty Kentish village, whither her parents removed while she was quite young, and where she remained until her marriage in 1884. Her father, who belongs to an old Dorsetshire family, traces a direct descent from the brother of the famous English Admiral, Blake, and the family is not without memorials of the great commander himself.

An omnivorous reader and a writer of verses from childhood, Mrs. Baker was at no time anxious to "rush into print," hence the volume of verse which challenged public opinion in 1901, had the advantage of the careful self-criticism of maturer powers. Her literary taste and poetic culture was fostered by her mother, whose admirable readings from Shakespeare, Tennyson, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Mrs. Browning enlivened the tea-table of the quiet Kentish home. Early in life she conceived an intense admiration for the poetry of Robert Browning, the outcome of which was some interesting correspondence and personal intercourse with the poet and his sister, and a sonnet to his memory, contributed to the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the

anniversary celebration of 1896. In the following year Mrs. Baker contributed a series of twelve sonnets on the months, written many years before, to the *Pall Mall Magazine*. The sonnet sequence which gives title to her first volume, embodies the idea of a deep passion spiritualised, and emphasises the belief that possession can be foregone when the soul grasps the higher aspect of love. At times a sigh escapes and human loneliness is realised; but the uplifting thought is that love rejoices in loving rather than possessing, and that love can only be perfect in self-renunciation.

Mrs. Baker's verse evidences both passion and imagination, in the expression of which she shows dramatic instinct and lyrical facility. Family circumstances have imposed upon her long silences, but more may be hoped from the larger leisure of future opportunity.

ALFRED H. MILES.

A PALACE OF DREAMS AND OTHER VERSE.

1901.

ADA BARTRICK BAKER.

I.—SONNETS FROM A PALACE OF DREAMS

(I.)

SINCE to my dreams you once unbidden came,
I know not why, nor may I dare to tell
How, though my heart remembers but too well
The thought of you has set my soul aflame
And I, when others chance to speak your name,
Feel that it holds for me a secret spell
To make my pulses thrill, my bosom swell
And flutter, all aglow with joy and shame.

Yet what should shame me? For although I meet
Your eyes, no knowledge in them dwells of this
My fancy stolen-shadow of a bliss
You gave me; and because it was so sweet,
And being but a dream can bring no pain,
I'll dream it, waking, o'er and o'er again.

(XXI.)

More rich am I than richest misers are
For I have you, more worth than glitt'ring hoard
Of heap'd-up gold, within my bosom stored
Where sweet remembrance needs no bolt nor bar.
And I do count myself the happier far
That you, my joy, to others joy afford:
Base treasures basely own but one poor lord,
Who is't dare claim the shining of a star?

Things chiefest prized,—the sun that glows above,
The flowery fields, the woods, the wand'ring air,
These sweet delights we must with others share,
And so am I content to share your love.
That you love others shall not make my grief;
That you love me makes you from those no thief.

(*XL.*)

Not to be near you! But to know my days
Apart from yours must waste away, and lose
The golden time which should be love's to use,
Like some bright spirit hovering round your ways:
To lift my eyes, and yet not meet your gaze
That falls upon my soul like thrilling dews:
To think of you—and weep! Yet, weeping, choose
Through all my tears love's bitter-sweet to praise.

To dream of you, when dawning slowly brings
Remembrance of my pain, that stirs and wakes
Against my bosom all the night, and makes
The lonely dark a voice of mournful things.
O this it is love's thorny crown to wear,
And find how sharp the pricks that wound me there!

(*XLIII.*)

It is like heaven to dream! Soft flows the river
Of shadowy sleep under a charmèd sky,
Lull'd by the trembling airs that wander by,
Where moonlight and pale starlight fall and shiver.
And one low song—'tis love's—pours forth a quiver
Of unseen joy. Ah! must we wake to sigh
That love is a regret? Do you, as I,
Hold back the gift, so fain to be the giver?

Do you, as I? The cry rings all in vain:
Your voice must never answer. For apart,
I whisper wild enchantments to my heart,
And bid it sleep and dream of heaven again.
O! on some bright, some far, ethereal shore,
To wake and know you mine, a dream no more!

II.—THE MORNING STAR.

HIGH o'er this dim and wandering world
Of shifting dreams and doubts and sighs,
An angel leans, with burning eyes
And wings like flames of fire up-curl'd.

It is his heart that feeds the flame
Whereby those mystic lamps, the seven,
Light up the golden courts of heaven;
Truth is his voice and Love his name.

Beyond this troubled twilight, born
Of half-held creeds that clash and jar,
He glows, a bright unfalt'ring star,
The herald of the coming morn.

He waits that hour, desired of God,
When the clear beams within his eyes
Shall burn to dust each house of lies
Where fetter'd feet so long have trod:

Where childhood's love and woman's trust
Rise up like curses, night and day,
To call down vengeance on the clay
That treads its fellow-clay to dust:

Where priestcraft, with its scorpion-rod,
Smites fear into the trembling breast
That else had dared to lie at rest
On the great loving Heart of God:

Where strange bewildered gropers seek,
Through mists of vain and wordy strife,
To enter at the gates of life
And hear the Voice Eternal speak

And HE SHALL speak—at whose decree
From formless darkness light had birth,
And all the beauty of the earth,
And all the glory of the sea.

"Arise and shine!" His Voice shall say.
Then shall the Morning Star arise
And scatter far the night of lies,
And love and truth bring forth the day.

III.—UNDER THE SUN.

LIFE is a Battle. And those that fight
Clash in the thick of a cloudy night;
And Wrong has its sword through the heart of Right.

Life is a Loom. And the threads that feed
Are drawn out of hearts and brains that bleed,
To fashion a cloak for the rich man's greed.

Life is a Mart. And the sellers buy
Lies for truth, and truth with a lie,
While honour and justice stand hand-cuff'd by.

Life is a Play. But the actors wear
Vainly their masks; for the sins they share
Out of their hollow eyelids stare.

Life is a Journey. And those that ride
Trample the weak as they trudge beside,
While the red blood crimsons the hoof of pride.

Life is a Dream! And the soul, perplext,
Feels through a fog of problems vext.
Sudden 'twill wake, and—light comes next!

IV.—IN HOSPITAL.

SO I'm shelved, you see, old fellow; and it seems a trifle rough,
When you're longing to be at them with the rest;
But I don't lie here and mope; for the doctors say they hope
I shall soon be fit and lively as the best.

And I had my glorious innings! Oh! we gave them piping hot
Such a supper they're not likely to digest;
And d'ye think I cared a rap, though I'm only a poor chap,
For the bullet that they landed in my chest?

Tell 'em all at home I'm waited on as if I was a lord,
And the nurses are just angels—bar the wings:
When you're lying here so weak that you hardly care to speak,
Oh! the comfort that a woman's tending brings.

Finished by the Nurse.

He was doing well, poor fellow! though the shot had touched his lung,
And the doctors did their best to pull him through.
I was with him when he died. The two locks of hair inside,
With his love, are for his mother, and for you

V.—NEIGHBOURS.

WHEN you live alone, how you hear each sound!
Should a mouse but scuttle along the ground
And a loose board creak—There! *was* it a mouse?
Or a ghost's step through the house!

Strange! What fancies come in a crowd,
When your fire burns fast and your clock ticks loud.
Outside, there's a sudden lull in the rain,
And—who tapp'd on the window-pane?

Only a wind-blown jasmine spray.
I saw it was loosen'd yesterday:
But it's odd, it's odd how the fancy lingers;
It seemed like a dead man's fingers!

Dead; yes, dead. Oh! more than a year.
And what should a dead man do down here,
Tapping like that on my window-pane?
The freak of a foolish brain!

But the wind, the wind! Like a soul bereft
Of reason, hopelessly lost and left,
It wails and moans. Ah! Years ago
A voice that I loved moan'd so.

Where was that tragic echo caught?
What ails the night? Or am I distraught?
Should I bear the sight, if I saw appear—
There are steps—hark!—drawing near . . . .

Steps indeed. Ah! but voices too.
Friends of mine—this is good of you!
Quick! Come in from the wind and the rain:
Thank God! I'm alive again.

VI.—LOST EDEN

IN my heart is a burning woe
For a sin I sinn'd long years ago.

In those days my soul was mute,
Satan had me under his foot.

He bade me pluck, that whispering devil,
The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Evil.

Every fiend that laughs in hell
Grinn'd with malice when I fell:

And my good Angel droop'd his wings,
Sad to record such shameful things.

But O! had I known the coming years,
I should have wept with blood for tears;

Ah! God, if my soul had understood,
I should have wept with tears of blood!

For now I know my bitter name:
'Twould curse his life with fire and shame;—

His life—alas!—with shame and fire
Who is the whole of my desire;

Who is the heaven I must forego.
O me! my heart's a burning woe!

VII.—THE HEART'S WINTER.

DEAD, dead, dead!
The dark clouds overhead
Never part to let light through
In a lovely rift of blue;
The trees have never a leaf,
The birds have never a song;
There's only time for grief
The whole day long!

Lost, lost, lost
The trees are tempest-tost;
The wind as it rages by
Storms at the angry sky;
Not a single star appears
To lighten the heaven's deep wrong;
And grief is too wild for tears
The whole night long!

VIII.—TRIOLET.

WHAT'S become of sweet July,
All the roses that she scatter'd
Ah! but where's the need to sigh
What's become of sweet July?
August's here, love; you and I
Are alive; as if it matter'd
What's become of sweet July,
And the roses that she scatter'd.

Rosa Newmarch.

1857.

MRS. NEWMARCH, so well and favourably known to all musicians as the Editor of the "Living Masters of Music" series issued by Mr. John Lane, a series which may fairly claim to be a new departure in musical literature, and as the author of the well-known work, "Tchaikovsky, His Life and Works," was born on the 18th of December, 1857, at Leamington Spa, the youngest child of Samuel Jeaffreson, M.D. Her maternal grandfather was James Kenney, a well-known playwright in his day, author of "Raising the Wind" (Jeremy Diddler), "Sweethearts and Wives," etc., etc. Her mother in her younger days enjoyed the friendship of Charles and Mary Lamb, Samuel Rogers, Prosper Merimée, Jules Sandeau and other well-known people. Mrs. Jeaffreson encouraged her little daughter to write, but she died when her youngest child was only fourteen years old, and as Mrs. Newmarch pathetically puts it, "After that I had no literary confidant."

Removing to London on her marriage in 1883, Mrs. Newmarch began writing on musical subjects, contributing articles to Grove's "Dictionary of Music," the "Dictionary of National Biography," and, having made a special study of Russian art and literature, to the *Fortnightly*, *Contemporary*, *Studio*, etc., on Russian music and painting, upon which subjects she has also lectured. Mrs. Newmarch visits Russia as often as she is able, and so keeps herself in touch

with its movements and developments in arts and letters.

Mrs. Newmarch's first volume of poems was published in 1903 under the title "Horæ Amoris: Songs and Sonnets." The title poem ("Love's Book of Hours") is a sonnet sequence based on a series of tragic events which actually happened, and each sonnet crystallises a phase or a mood in the inner life of the two chief actors. It may have been suggested by Meredith's "Modern Love," but it is not consciously imitative of it. Love of music and Russia gives distinction to the volume.

"Songs to a Singer, and Other Verses" is the title of Mrs. Newmarch's second volume of verse, published by Mr. John Lane in 1906. The selections given in the following pages will doubtless make all lovers of music desire to possess the whole.

ALFRED H. MILES.

HORÆ AMORIS.

SONGS AND SONNETS.

1903.

ROSA NEWMARCH.

I.—AT SUNSET.

LO, since I saw thee, whereso'er I move
The blessed sunlight shines upon my way,
That until now through wastes of darkness lay;
Whereon no rosy shafts fell from above,
Nor transient gleams of brightness to disprove
My dread of life's intolerable grey.
How hast thou turned my darkness into day,
Who art my brighter sunlight, O my love!

But if at day's decline, when silently
The sun-glow creeps from off the golden lawn,
Where white as kindling stars the daisies lie,
I felt your love as silently withdrawn:
Should I have heart to live until the dawn,
Or pray that in the darkness I might die?

II.—THE HEART-CHAMBER.

GIVE me within your heart a little space,
Where only I may come,
And make myself a dwelling-place,
Who have no other home.

But which among the chambers of your heart
May unto me belong,—
The quiet study, where you dream apart
And turn your dreams to song?

Or closely-curtain'd alcove, set aside
For prayerful whispers low?
Or perfumed guest-room, with its doors flung wide,
Where all may come and go?

Not these, nor yet the chapel, built above,
Before whose inner shrine
You ministered long years unto a love
Whose image was not mine.

But ah! your place of sorrows, dear—the room
You enter soon or late,
Give me the key, that in its inner gloom
I may abide and wait.

III.—AT THE PIANO.

"Sweet airs that give delight and hurt not."

PLAY me some sober tune of long ago:
A minuet of Lulli, stately sweet,
Or march of Handel, strong in rhythmic beat,
Wherein no tides of passion come and go.

For, dearest, if you plunge my soul again
In those dark waters, turbulent and deep,
Of Schumann's anguish, I must surely weep
Fresh tears into that bitter sea of pain.

IV.—TO AN INSTRUMENT.

OTHERS, before he came with mastery
To set thy stops to choral songs of praise,
Or draw thy subtlest undertones from thee,
Essayed to wake thy spirit in past days.
His touch is stilled for ever. Yet I stand
And listen while thy soulless, fickle keys,
In dull obedience to a stranger's hand,
For other ears give forth fresh voluntaries.
And some there be, whose hearts thus lightly move
In shallow melody to each new touch,
And deem these mutable vibrations Love.
O Unforgotten, mine is not of such!

My heart shall be like some rare instrument,
Whose strings broke when its only player went.

V.—A LITANY.

O LIGHTS that break from fickle April skies,
Let me forget those grey, inconstant eyes.

O raindrops glittering when the shower clears,
Let me forget my swift and burning tears.

O wind that cries through wastes untenanted,
Let me forget the bitter things were said.

O sea that woos the cold, white rock in vain,
Let me forget the past with all its pain.

O mother earth, warm with spring showers, and wet,
Give me a place wherein I may forget.

VI.—THE CITY OF HOPE.

(Moscow.)

BEYOND the plains where mighty rivers flow
The City of my Hope lies eastward yet,
Like gold embraid, in blue enamel set,
There Cross and Crescent in the sunlight glow.
There ruby, green and turquoise, row on row,
Rise swelling dome and carven minaret,
Whose shadows, azure-shot or violet,
Trace strange devices on the spotless snow.

What if some day I held you warm and fast
At sunset, while we scoured the glittering drift
Behind three black Orlovian horses swift,
Till at the Saviour's Gate, outside the wall,
My tangled present and your bitter past
Were dropped, like dreams at dawn beyond recall?

VII.—CHANCE BRINGS ME TO THE QUIET TOWN AGAIN.

CHANCE brings me to the quiet town again,
Built on a low, brown cliff 'twixt heath and sea,
Where once we spent six days of joy and pain,
Whose every corner holds a memory.
There, where storm-twisted elms slant o'er the lane
That leads from shore to marsh, first broke on me
Some presage that my love was given in vain.
Here, where the fence is wreathed with briony,
I think this wooden rail is warm even yet
Where long we leaned and talked of heaven and creeds
Below, the jutting pier shines black and wet
Where lapping waves play in its clinging weeds;
When there we said farewell with smiles and tears—
Could either guess the treason of the years?

1906.

ROSA NEWMARCH

I.—THE ROSE OF SONG.

"Strange rose which blossoms free
On boughs of an enchanted tree
And sings like any bird."
ANDREW LANG.

SHE stands superb; a queen apart
From all the radiant, jewelled throng,
As when a rose unfolds among
The gay parterres her glowing heart,
All lesser flowers, though rare and sweet,
Must seem but subjects at her feet.

She sings: each lifted face in turn
Is touched with rapture or with pain,
O voice, wherein life's triumphs reign,
O voice, wherein life's passions yearn.
My heart salutes her—queen above
All queens, my singing rose of love!

II.—THE FALLING STAR.

ONE star has left its purple track
And from the happy skies
Has pierced that ocean blind and black,
Whence never star nor ship came back,
Where hope extinguished lies.

O fall not thou, my star, whose light
Is all too dear for speech,
To hidden deeps, where stark and white
My wrecked hopes drift through gulfs too dark
For love's own lamp to reach.

III.—PRELUDE TO DAY.

THE violins had stirred with hopes that died,
Like winds too weak to usher in the morn,
While to the dark-toned basses still replied
The sad, uncertain echo of the horn.

The impending mass of music seemed to brood
Inert and torpid, as nocturnal earth
Waits pulseless in the vague disquietude
Of that last hour which shrouds the daylight's birth.

Until the blare of trumpets came to break
And splinter darkness into scarlet bars;
Then flute-scales, as from thrushes half-awake,
And harp-chords like the farewell sigh of stars.

But last of all the effulgence of your voice
Dawned, scattering all the lingering fears of night,
And bade my heart grow warm, my soul rejoice,
As though God said once more: *let there be light*

IV.—THE BITTER MELODY.

IF I must name the song in which
Your voice has touched my spirit most,
'Twas not that splendid music, rich
In clarion-cries from Love's glad host,
When victory and passion meet
In lives that never knew defeat.

'Twas in that bitter melody,
Wherein love's triumph had no part,
Which like a lone, unanswered sea
Wailed in its woe, until my heart
Heard its own voiceless pain that spoke
And, realising, sobbed and broke.

A. Mary F. Darmesteter.

1857.

Agnes Mary Frances Robinson, now Madame James Darmesteter, was born at Leamington, February 27th, 1857. She is the daughter of Mr. George T. Robinson; her younger sister, Frances Mabel Robinson, is one of the most powerful of the younger novelists of the day. Miss Robinson lived in London until her marriage in 1888 with M. James Darmesteter, Professor of Persian in the Collège de France and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes. Since her marriage she has lived in Paris, where her salon is one of the centres of Parisian letters and learning.

Madame Darmesteter is the spoilt child of literature—of two literatures. If she has attained or preserved any originality, it is in spite of the kindness of Fate and her friends. Her surroundings have always been only too perfect. Growing up in a literary house, with all the London singers about her, and the sound of verse in the very air, she naturally signalised her coming of age by the publication of a volume of poems. She and her book were welcomed together, not more than they deserved to be, but without the discipline of waiting. And she and her books have always been very fortunate. Her triste muse has had the task of inventing a delicate misery which (happily!) has never existed. All this was an admirable lot in life, and an excellent

education for a singer who should be content to sing to a borrowed lute. And at first she was content. But even then one heard the new voice. The delicious "Handful of Honeysuckle"—a title taken from one of the Elizabethan miscellanies—could have been written only when it was written. It belongs to that delightful, youthful time when books like "The Gallery of Pigeons" were possible—so romantic and rococo, so absurd, so inspiriting, so exuberantly poetic. Miss Robinson's book had fantasies of Queen Rosalys, Paradise fancies from some pre-Raphaelite heaven of rose, lily, and girasole, French refrains culled "In Apollo's Garden," triolets, sonnets, and songs with the faint odour about them of "rose-leaves when the rose is dead." There were little narratives and little apologues, like bits of old tapestry or illuminated missal margins. And with all this—so much of it is only an echo—an individuality, even in the echo, and, in certain pieces, the personal note. There could be no mistake about the singing-voice—a new singing-voice in the lyric nest of those days. What was most notable in the volume was an infinite devotion to art, the passion of the genuine artist, that might seem to augur well, and yet be dangerous, for the future. Too passionate a devotion, one might have feared, dreading a virtuosity which is often fatal to those who love Art too well. Too well? Let us say, rather, with too narrow, too exclusive, a fondness. The next volume, three years later, came with a piece of serious and earnest work, a strenuous translation of the "Crowned Hippolytus" of Euripides. Poetic drill of this sort could not but be useful to the writer, and among the original

pieces one noticed some which might be said to mark an advance in endeavour, in aim, if not exactly in accomplishment. "The New Arcadia" of 1884 marks, in a sense, a further advance, but an advance along a side-route, through bad country. These heavily tragic poems of such peasant life as Balzac could deal with, overstrained, ineffective as they are, do really indicate growth. Life, now for the first time, has been apprehended—with a frightened recoil, naturally, of the sleeper awakened. The book was inspired by Bastien-Lepage's great picture, "Les Foins," now in the Luxembourg. In that dull peasant face, in those limbs on which the whole weight of the heat rests visibly, there is indeed something of the inarticulate mournfulness of lives lived out blindly, hopelessly, often brutally, under the sun. With that feeling of the pity of it, there comes to her a feeling which in its elementary stage is too crude for art. She makes an attempt, fruitlessly, to paint episodes of tragic life, broadly, in powerful colours. Life for a moment has been too much for art; and that is well, but not in its immediate effect. She feels that everything is changed—that she has done with dreams, that the misery of the world has left her individual joys and pains colourless. "I have lost my singing-voice!" she laments, disproving the statement by some magical poems, that have the savour and colour of the South in them, and, here delicately and rightly, the personal note.

In 1886 came "An Italian Garden," which remains the crown and flower of her poetic work. The dreamer has fallen back into the circle of dreams, but the dreams can never again be of that mere

heaven in arabesque and embroidery. There is a human note in them, a note of sincerity, in what is still often a dainty make-believe—a make-believe of despair, a *décor* of cypresses, which, however, doubtless answers to something genuine—a pensiveness, a gentle melancholy—in this nature which has come through art to take an interest in life. The singing-voice, so long and so well trained, has now the true ring, the instinctive perfection of note. And how sweet and fresh and fine, simple and unstrained always, spontaneously lyrical, is this singing-voice, are these songs! Slight, one may say: well, slight, but how perfect, and how difficult to achieve perfection here—in this rose-leaf charm, this liquid melody, like falling water or a bird's voice! Another volume, two years later—"Songs, Ballads, and a Garden Play"—is much in the manner of the "Italian Garden," but scarcely so fresh, varied, and exquisite. It has something new in the shape of ballads, distinctly well written, but not the individual work of a sheer lyrist, with a little dramatic scene, which was worth writing for the sake of the song it contains.

Madame Darmesteter has written prose, but it is rather too much the prose of a poet. A book on Emily Brontë deals sympathetically and picturesquely with that splendid woman and great writer, whose life was the saddest of tragedies. "Arden," a novel, can be read with pleasure, but it cannot be said to show any natural faculty for novel-writing. "The End of the Middle Ages," is a series of essays—studies towards a serious historical work, "The French in Italy," which will be a history of the French wars in Italy between the battle of Poictiers

and the battle of Agincourt. Why should a poet write history? one may query. But Madame Darmesteter is devoted to her work, and will tell you that it is the history of a chimæra, and therefore enters into a poet's proper regions.

Madame Darmesteter's progress in poetry from an unreal fancifulness, by way of a foiled attempt at dogged realism, to a fancifulness which is the flowering of the true reality, cannot but be interesting to observe. The girl who would scribble whole poems in metrical signs—the words to be added afterwards, the metre being the main thing—has learnt much. She has come to understand both what should be done, and what she herself can do. She has a wholesome love for poetry where it is most poetry—the song, the short poem. Heine has taught her much, and it is perhaps from him that she has learnt to be so simple, direct and brief—to be so modern. Her poetry, as she now writes it, is very modern. Despite her summer inspirations—for hers is a muse that hates the winter—she has the intensity of troubled sentiment that is at least some part of modernity nowadays. Perhaps it is for this reason, among others, that her work is so well known abroad—in France through the admirable prose translation of M. Darmesteter (which one may imagine to have been literally a labour of love), in Italy through the articles of Signor Nencioni and the rhymed version of Signor Giovenale Sicca. A German translation has also appeared; those who can may read enthusiastic appreciations of her work in most of the languages of Europe. Perhaps no living English poet, after Swinburne, is nearly so well known abroad. This is partly an accident

of circumstance; it is largely a matter of instinctive response. Madame Darmesteter has always been alive to the influence of what is new and significant in foreign literature, and it is but just that her appreciation should be returned.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

The collected poems of Madame Darmesteter (Declaux) were published in 1902.

A HANDFUL OF HONEYSUCKLE.

1878.

A. MARY F. DARMESTETER.

I.—A PASTORAL.

IT was Whit Sunday yesterday,
The neighbours met at church to pray;
But I remembered it was May
And went a-wandering far away.

I rested on a shady lawn,
Behind I heard green branches torn,
And through the gap there looked a Faun,
Green ivy hung from either horn.

We built ourselves a flowery house
With roof and walls of tangled boughs,
But while we sat and made carouse
The church bells drowned our songs and vows.

The light died out and left the sky,
We sighed and rose and said good-bye.
We had forgotten—He and I,
That he was dead, that I must die.

II.—DAWN-ANGELS.

ALL night I watched awake for morning,
At last the East grew all aflame,
The birds for welcome sang, or warning,
And with their singing morning came.

Along the gold-green heavens drifted
Pale wandering souls that shun the light,
Whose cloudy pinions torn and rifted,
Had beat the bars of Heaven all night.

These clustered round the moon, but higher
A troop of shining spirits went,
Who were not made of wind or fire,
But some divine dream-element.

Some held the Light, while those remaining
Shook out their harvest-coloured wings,
A faint unusual music raining,
(Whose sound was Light) on earthly things.

They sang, and as a mighty river
Their voices washed the night away,
From East to West ran one white shiver,
And waxen strong their song was Day.

III.—PARADISE FANCIES.

I.

LAST night I met mine own true love
Waking in Paradise,
A halo shone above his hair
A glory in his eyes.

We sat and sang in alleys green
And heard the angels play,
Believe me, this was true last night
Though it is false to-day.

II.

Through Paradise garden
A minstrel strays,
An old golden viol
For ever he plays.

Birds fly to his head,
Beasts lie at his feet,
For none of God's angels
Make music so sweet.

And here, far from Zion
And lonely and mute,
I listen and long
For my heart is the lute.

III.

Sing, oh the flowers of Paradise
Rose, lily and girasole!
In all the fields of Paradise
Every flower is a soul.

A climbing bindweed you are there
With petals lily fine,
Around my rose-bush fragrant-fair
Your tendrils twist and twine.

Too close those slender tendrils cling,
Their sweet embrace is Death.
But o'er my dead red roses swing,
Your lilies wreath on wreath.

IV.

On the topmost branch of the Tree of Life
There hung a ripe red apple,
The angels singing underneath
All praised its crimson dapple.

They plucked it once to play at ball,
But 'mid the shouts and laughter
The apple fell o'er Heaven's edge,
Sad angels looking after.

E'en while at ease to see it rest
Beside a peaceful chapel,
An old priest flung it farther still,
"Bah, what a battered apple!"

IV.—SONNET.

GOD sent a poet to reform His earth.
But when he came he found it cold and poor,
Harsh and unlovely, where each prosperous boor
Held poets light for all their heavenly birth,
He thought—Myself can make one better worth
The living in than this—full of old lore,
Music and light and love, where Saints adore
And Angels, all within mine own soul's girth.

But when at last he came to die, his soul
Saw Earth (flying past to Heaven) with new love,
And all the unused passion in him cried:
O God, your Heaven I know and weary of.
Give me this world to work in and make whole,
God spoke: Therein, fool, thou hast lived and died

THE CROWNED HIPPOLYTUS.

1881.

A. MARY F. DARMESTETER.

I.—TWO LOVERS.

I.

I LOVE my lover; on the heights above me
He mocks my poor attainment with a frown.
I, looking up as he is looking down,
By his displeasure guess he still doth love me;
For his ambitious love would ever prove me
More excellent than I as yet am shown,
So, straining for some good ungrasped, unknown,
I vainly would become his image of me.

And, reaching through the dreadful gulfs that sever
Our souls, I strive with darkness nights and days,
Till my perfected work towards him I raise,
Who laughs thereat, and scorns me more than ever.
Yet his upbraiding is beyond all praise.
This lover that I love I call: Endeavour.

II.

I have another lover loving me,
Himself beloved of all men, fair and true.
He would not have me change although I grew
Perfect as Light, because more tenderly
He loves myself than loves what I might be.
Low at my feet he sings the winter through,
And, never won, I love to hear him woo.

For in my heaven both sun and moon is he,
To my bare life a fruitful-flooding Nile,
His voice like April airs that in our isle
Wake sap in trees that slept since autumn went.
His words are all caresses, and his smile
The relic of some Eden ravishment;
And he that loves me so I call: Content.

II.—A JONQUIL.

IN THE PISAN CAMPO SANTO.

OUT of the place of death,
Out of the cypress shadow,
Out of sepulchral earth,
Dust that Calvary gave,
Sprang, as fragrant of breath
As any flower of the meadow,
This, with death in its birth,
Sent like speech from the grave.
So, in a world of doubt,
Love—like a flower—
Blossoms suddenly white,
Suddenly sweet and pure,
Shedding a breath about
Of new mysterious power,
Lifting a hope in the night,
Not to be told, but sure.

1884.

A. MARY F. DARMESTETER.

TUSCAN OLIVES.

(RISPETTI.)

THE colour of the olives who shall say?
In winter on the yellow earth they're blue,
A wind can change the green to white or gray,
But they are olives still in every hue;
But they are olives always, green or white,
As love is love in torment or delight;
But they are olives, ruffled or at rest,
As love is always love in tears or jest.

We walked along the terraced olive-yard,
And talked together till we lost the way;
We met a peasant, bent with age, and hard,
Bruising the grape-skins in a vase of clay;
Bruising the grape-skins for the second wine.
We did not drink, and left him, Love of mine;
Bruising the grapes already bruised enough:
He had his meagre wine, and we our love.

We climbed one morning to the sunny height,
Where chestnuts grow no more, and olives grow;
Far-off the circling mountains, cinder-white,
The yellow river and the gorge below.
"Turn round," you said, O flower of Paradise;
I did not turn, I looked upon your eyes.
"Turn round," you said, "turn round, look at the view!"
I did not turn, my Love, I looked at you.

How hot it was! Across the white-hot wall
Pale olives stretch towards the blazing street;
You broke a branch, you never spoke at all,
But gave it me to fan with in the heat;
You gave it me without a sign or word,
And yet, my love, I think you knew I heard.
You gave it me without a word or sign:
Under the olives first I called you mine.

At Lucca, for the autumn festival,
The streets are tulip-gay; but you and I
Forget them, seeing over church and wall
Guinigi's tower soar i' the black-blue sky,
A stem of delicate rose against the blue,
And on the top two lonely olives grew,
Crowning the tower, far from the hills, alone,
As on our risen love our lives are grown.

Who would have thought we should stand again together,
Here, with the convent a frown of towers above us;
Here, mid the sere-wooded hills and wintry weather;
Here, where the olives bend down and seem to love us;
Here, where the fruit-laden olives half remember
All that began in their shadow last November;
Here, where we knew we must part, must part and sever;
Here where we know we shall love for aye and ever.

Reach up and pluck a branch, and give it me,
That I may hang it in my Northern room,
That I may find it there, and wake, and see
—Not you! not you!—dead leaves and wintry gloom.
O senseless olives, wherefore should I take
Your leaves to balm a heart that can but ache?
Why should I take you hence, that can but show
How much is left behind? I do not know.

AN ITALIAN GARDEN.

1886.

A. MARY F. DARMESTETER.

I.—FLORENTINE MAY.

STILL, still is the Night ; still as the pause after pain;
Still and as dear ;
Deep, solemn, immense ; veiling the stars in the clear
Thrilling and luminous blue of the moon—shot atmosphere ;
Ah, could the Night remain !

Who, truly, shall say thou art sullen or dark or unseen,
Thou, O heavenly Night,
Clear o'er the valley of olives asleep in the quivering light,
Clear o'er the pale-red hedge of the rose, and the lilies all white
Down at my feet in the green ?

Nay, not as the Day, thou art light, O Night, with a beam
Far more dear and divine ;
Never the noon was blue as the tremulous heavens of thine,
Pulsing with stars half seen, and vague in a pallid shrine,
Vague as a dream.

Night, clear with the moon, filled with the dreamy fire
Shining in thicket and close,
Fire from the lamp in his breast that the luminous fire-fly throws;
Night, full of wandering light and the song, and the blossoming rose,
Night, be thou my desire!
Night, Angel of Night, hold me and cover me so—
Open thy wings!
Ah, bend above and embrace!—till I hear in the one bird that sings
The throb of thy musical heart in the dusk, and the magical things
Only the Night can know.

II.—VENETIAN NOCTURNE.

DOWN the narrow Calle where the moonlight cannot enter
The houses are so high;
Silent and alone we pierced the night's dim core and centre—
Only you and I.
Clear and sad our footsteps rang along the hollow pavement,
Sounding like a bell;
Sounding like a voice that cries to souls in Life's enslavement,
"There is Death as well!"
Down the narrow dark we went, until a sudden whiteness
Made us hold our breath;
All the white Salute towers and domes in moonlit brightness,—
Ah! could this be Death?

III.—TUSCAN CYPRESS.

Foir di Cipresso !
Accenditi, Candela, in su quel masso ;
Fa lume all'amor mio che passa adesso.

M'affaccio alla finestra e veggo il mare,
E mi ricordo che s'ha da morire.
Termineranno le speranze care !

TUSCAN STORNELLI.

RISPETTI.

I.

MY mother bore me 'neath the streaming moon,
And all the enchanted light is in my soul.
I have no place amid the happy noon,
I have no shadow there nor aureole.

Ah, lonely whiteness in a clouded sky,
You are alone, nor less alone am I ;
Ah, moon, that makest all the roses grey,
The roses I behold are wan as they !

II.

What good is there, Ah me ! what good in Love ?
Since, even if you love me, we must part ;
And since for either, an you cared enough,
There's but division and a broken heart ?

And yet, God knows, to hear you say : My Dear !
I would lie down and stretch me on the bier.
And yet would I, to hear you say : My own !
With mine own hands drag down the burial stone.

III.

I love you more than any words can say,
And yet you do not feel I love you so ;
And slowly I am dying day by day,—
You look at me, and yet you do not know

You look at me and yet you do not fear:
You do not see the mourners with the bier.
You answer when I speak and wish me well,
And still you do not hear the passing bell.

IV.

O Love, O Love, come over the sea, come here,
Come back and kiss me once when I am dead!
Come back and lay a rose upon my bier,
Come, light the tapers at my feet and head.

Come back and kiss me once upon the eyes,
So I, being dead, shall dream of Paradise;
Come kneel beside me once and say a prayer,
So shall my soul be happy anywhere.

V.

I sowed the field of Love with many seeds,
With many sails I sailed before the blast,
And all my crop is only bitter weeds;
My sails are torn, the winds have split the mast.

All of the winds have torn my sails and shattered,
All of the winds have blown my seed and scattered,
All of the storms have burst on my endeavour,—
So let me sleep at last and sleep for ever.

VI.

I am so pale to-night, so mere a ghost,
Ah, what, to-morrow, shall my spirit be?
No living angel of the heavenly host,
No happy soul, blithe in eternity.

Oh, I shall wander on beneath the moon,
A lonely phantom seeking for you, soon;
A wandering ghost, seeking you timidly,
Whom you will tremble, dear, and start to see!

VII.

When I am dead and I am quite forgot,
What care I if my spirit lives or dies?
To walk with angels in a grassy plot,
And pluck the lilies grown in Paradise?

Ah, no—the heaven of all my heart has been
To hear your voice and catch the sighs between.
Ah, no—the better heaven I fain would give,
But in a cranny of your soul to live.

VIII.

Ah me, you well might wait a little while,
And not forget me, Sweet, until I die!
I had a home, a little distant isle,
With shadowy trees and tender misty sky.

I had a home! It was less dear than thou,
And I forgot, as you forget me now.
I had a home, more dear than I could tell,
And I forgot, but now remember well.

IX.

Love me to-day and think not on to-morrow,
Come, take my hands, and lead me out of doors,
There in the fields let us forget our sorrow,
Talking of Venice and Ionian shores;—

Talking of all the seas innumerable
Where we will sail and sing when I am well;
Talking of Indian roses gold and red,
Which we will plait in wreaths—when I am dead.

X.

There is a Siren in the middle sea
Sings all day long and wreathes her pallid hair,
Seven years you sail, and seven ceaselessly,
From any port ere you adventure there.

Thither we'll go, and thither sail away
Out of the world, to hear the Siren play;
Thither we'll go and hide among her tresses,
Since all the world is savage wildernesses.

XI.

Tell me a story, dear, that is not true,
Strange as a vision, full of splendid things;
Here will I lie and dream it is not you,
And dream it is a mocking bird that sings.

For if I find your voice in any part,
Even the sound of it will break my heart;
For if you speak of us and of our love,
I faint and die to feel the thrill thereof.

XII.

Let us forget we loved each other much,
Let us forget we ever have to part,
Let us forget that any look or touch
Once let in either to the other's heart.

Only we'll sit upon the daisied grass
And hear the larks and see the swallows pass;
Only we'll live awhile, as children play,
Without to-morrow, without yesterday.

XIII.

Far, far away and in the middle sea,
So still I dream, although the dream is vain,
There lies a valley full of rest for me,
Where I shall live and you shall love again.

O ships that sail, O masts against the sky,
Will you not stop awhile in passing by?
O prayers that hope, O faith that never knew,
Will you not take me on to heaven with you?

XIV.

Flower of the Cypress, little bitter bloom,
You are the only blossom left to gather;
I never prized you, grown amid the gloom,
But well you last, though all the others wither.

Flower of the Cypress, I will bind a crown
Tight round my brows to still these fancies down.
Flower of the Cypress, I will tie a wreath
Tight round my breast to kill the heart beneath.

XV.

Ah, Love, I cannot die, I cannot go
Down in the dark and leave you all alone,
Ah, hold me fast, safe in the warmth I know,
And never shut me underneath a stone.

Dead in the grave! And I can never hear
If you are ill or if you miss me, dear.
Dead, oh my God! and you may need me yet,
While I shall sleep, while I—while I—forget!

XVI.

Come away Sorrow, Sorrow come away—
Let us go sit in some cool, shadowy place;
There shall you sing and hush me all the day,
While I will dream about my lover's face.

Hush me, O Sorrow, like a babe to sleep,
Then close the lids above mine eyes that weep;
Rock me, O Sorrow, like a babe in pain,
Nor, when I slumber, wake me up again.

1888.

A. MARY F. DARMESTETER.

I.—ETRUSCAN TOMBS.

I.

TO think the face we love shall ever die,
And be the indifferent earth, and know us not!
To think that one of us shall live to cry
On one long buried in a distant spot!

O wise Etruscans, faded in the night
Yourselves, with scarce a rose-leaf on your trace,
You kept the ashes of the dead in sight,
And shaped the vase to seem the vanished face.

But, O my Love, my life is such an urn
That tender memories mould with constant touch,
Until the dust and earth of it they turn
To your dear image that I love so much:

A sacred urn, filled with the sacred past,
That shall recall you while the clay shall last.

II.

These cinerary urns with human head
And human arms that dangle at their sides,
The earliest potters made them for their dead,
To keep the mother's ashes or the bride's.

O rude attempt of some long-spent despair—
With symbol and with emblem discontent—
To keep the dead alive and as they were,
The actual features and the glance that went!

The anguish of your art was not in vain,
For lo, upon these alien shelves removed
The sad immortal images remain,
And show that once they lived and once you loved.

But oh, when I am dead may none for me
Invoke so drear an immortality!

III.

Beneath the branches of the olive yard
Are roots where cyclamen and violet grow;
Beneath the roots the earth is deep and hard,
And there a king was buried long ago.

The peasants digging deeply in the mould
Cast up the autumn soil about the place,
And saw a gleam of unexpected gold,
And underneath the earth a living face.

With sleeping lids and rosy lips he lay
Among the wreaths and gems that mark the king
One moment; then a little dust and clay
Fell shrivelled over wreath and urn and ring.

A carven slab recalls his name and deeds,
Writ in a language no man living reads.

IV.

Here lies the tablet graven in the past,
Clear-charactered and firm and fresh of line.
See, not a word is gone; and yet how fast
The secret no man living may divine!

What did he choose for witness in the grave?
A record of his glory on the earth?
The wail of friends? The Pæans of the brave?
The sacred promise of the second birth?

The tombs of ancient Greeks in Sicily
Are sown with slender discs of graven gold
Filled with the praise of Death: "Thrice happy he
Wrapt in the milk-soft sleep of dreams untold!"

They sleep their patient sleep in altered lands,
The golden promise in their fleshless hands.

II.—TUBEROSES.

I.

THE Tuberose you left me yesterday
Leans yellowing in the glass we set it in;
It could not live when you were gone away,
Poor spike of withering sweetness changed and thin.
And all the fragrance of the dying flower
Is grown too faint and poisoned at the source,
Like passion that survives a guilty hour,
To find its sweetness heavy with remorse.
What shall we do, my dear, with dying roses?
Shut them in weighty tomes where none will look
—To wonder when the unfrequent page uncloses
Who shut the wither'd blossoms in the book?—
What shall we do, my dear, with things that perish,
Memory, roses, love we feel and cherish?

II.

Alive and white, we praised the Tuberose,
So sweet it fill'd the garden with its breath
A spike of waxy bloom that grows and grows
Until at length it blooms itself to death.
Everything dies that lives—everything dies;
How shall we keep the flower we lov'd so long?
O press to death the transient thing we prize,
Crush it, and shut the elixir in a song.
A song is neither live nor sweet nor white.
It hath no heavenly blossom tall and pure,
No fragrance can it breathe for our delight,
It grows not, neither lives; it may endure.
Sweet Tuberose, adieu! you fade too fast!
Only a dream, only a thought, can last.

III.

Who'd stay to muse if Death could never wither?
Who dream a dream if Passion did not pass?
But, once deceived, poor mortals hasten hither
To watch the world in Fancy's magic glass.

Truly your city, O men, hath no abiding!
Built on the sand it crumbles, as it must;
And as you build, above your praise and chiding,
The columns fall to crush you to the dust.

But fashion'd in the mirage of a dream,
Having nor life nor sense, a bubble of nought,
The enchanted City of the Things that seem
Keeps till the end of time the eternal Thought.

Forswear to-day, forswearing joy and sorrow,
Forswear to-day, O man, and take to-morrow.

III.—AN ORCHARD AT AVIGNON.

THE hills are white, but not with snow:
They are as pale in summer time,
For herb or grass may never grow
Upon their slopes of lime.

Within the circle of the hills
A ring, all flowering in a round,
An orchard-ring of almond fills
The plot of stony ground.

More fair than happier trees, I think,
Grown in well watered pasture land,
These parched and stunted branches, pink
Above the stones and sand.

O white, austere, ideal place,
Where very few will care to come,
Where spring hath lost the waving grace
She wears for us at home!

Fain would I sit and watch for hours
The holy whiteness of thy hills,
Their wreath of pale auroral flowers,
Their peace the silence fills.

A place of secret peace thou art,
Such peace as in an hour of pain
One moment fills the amazed heart,
And never comes again.

A. MARY F. DARMESTETER.

I.—THE DEAD FRIEND.

WHEN you were alive, at least,
There were days I never met you.
In the study, at the feast,
By the hearth, I could forget you.

Moods there were of many days
When, methinks, I did not mind you.
Now, oh now, in any place
Wheresoe'er I go, I find you!

You . . . but how profoundly changed,
O you dear-belov'd dead woman!
Made mysterious and estranged,
All-pervading, superhuman.

Ah! to meet you as of yore,
Kind, alert, and quick to laughter:
You, the friend I loved Before;
Not this tragic friend of After.

II.—TWILIGHT.

WHEN I was young the twilight seemed too long,
How often on the western window seat
I leaned my book against the misty pane
And spelled the last enchanting lines again,
The while my mother hummed an ancient song,
Or sighed a little and said: "The hour is sweet!"
When I, rebellious, clamoured for the light.

But now I love the soft approach of night,
And now with folded hands I sit and dream
While all too fleet the hours of twilight seem;
And thus I know that I am growing old.

O granaries of Age! O manifold
And royal harvest of the common years!
There are in all thy treasure-house no ways
But lead by soft descent and gradual slope
To memories more exquisite than Hope.
Thine is the Iris born of olden tears,
And thrice more happy are the happy days
That live divinely in thy lingering rays.
So autumn roses bear a lovelier flower;
So in the emerald after-sunset hour
The orchard wall and trembling aspen trees
Appear an infinite Hesperides.
Ay, as at dusk we sit with folded hands,
Who knows, who cares in what enchanted lands
We wander while the undying memories throng?
When I was young the twilight seemed too long.

Constance C. W. Naden.

1858—1889.

THE life of Constance Caroline Woodhill Naden was one of incessant self-culture, with enough of achievement to show that no culture could be excessive for so richly and variously endowed a mind. Born at Edgbaston, on 24th January, 1858, dying in London, 23rd December, 1889, she had evinced remarkable powers in poetry, in philosophy, and in science, and accumulated knowledge which, by the unanimous testimony of those best enabled to judge was no less remarkable for solid thoroughness than for facility of acquirement or the brilliancy of display. By the same testimony she afforded a still rarer instance of a nature unspoiled by success and admiration; entirely exempt from vanity and pedantry; as simple, tender, and playful at the last as at the first. This high praise seems borne out by the internal evidence of her poetical writings, whose main title to remembrance is the strong personal interest which they inspire. They are remarkable as compositions, both for correctness of form and eloquence of diction; yet their chief interest is not their ability but their inability to express the strong spirit behind them. This is the more remarkable as they are much less subjective than is usually the case with the productions of young poetesses, and contain much less of merely personal sentiment; while some of the best pieces

belong to a department little cultivated by female votaries of the Muse—the humorous. This preference for ideal characters and imaginary situations bespeaks a creative power which might have achieved something memorable but for the authoress's digression into the realms of abstract thinking, and in particular her adoption of a system of hyper-idealism which must ultimately destroy the capacity for poetical creation by resolving existence into mere illusion. Her views and aspirations might again have altered; so far as can be judged, however, her work in poetry was accomplished; its net result, two volumes, more interesting as revelations of a noble nature than as poetical inspirations, yet poetry beyond a doubt, neither mechanical nor imitative. She published two volumes of verse, "Songs and Sonnets of Springtime" (1881), and "The Modern Apostle and Other Poems" (1887). Her most finished writing is in her longer poems, "A Modern Apostle," "The Elixir of Life," "The Story of Clarice," which are not well adapted for extract; but the three pieces, "The Pantheist's Song of Immortality," "Friendship," and "Natural Selection," express the three leading characteristics of her nature as illustrated by her verse—intellectual rapture, devoted affection, and gay fanciful humour.

RICHARD GARNETT.

CONSTANCE C. W. NADEN.

I.—THE PANTHEIST'S SONG OF IMMORTALITY.

BRING snow-white lilies, pallid heart-flushed roses,
Enwreathe her brow with heavy scented flowers;
In soft undreaming sleep her head reposes,
While, unregretted, pass the sunlit hours.

Few sorrows did she know—and all are over;
A thousand joys—but they are all forgot:
Her life was one fair dream of friend and lover;
And were they false—ah, well, she knows it not.

Look in her face, and lose thy dread of dying;
Weep not, that rest will come, that toil will cease:
Is it not well, to lie as she is lying,
In utter silence, and in perfect peace?

Canst thou repine, that sentient days are numbered?
Death is unconscious Life, that waits for birth:
So didst thou live, while yet thine embryo slumbered,
Senseless, unbreathing, e'en as heaven and earth.

Then shrink no more from Death, though Life be gladness,
Nor seek him, restless in thy lonely pain:
The law of joy ordains each hour of sadness,
And firm or frail, thou canst not live in vain.

What though thy name by no sad lips be spoken,
And no fond heart shall keep thy memory green?
Thou yet shalt leave thine own enduring token,
For earth is not as though thou ne'er hadst been.

See yon broad current, hasting to the ocean,
Its ripples glorious in the western red:
Each wavelet passes, trackless; yet its motion
Has changed for evermore the river bed.

Ah, wherefore weep, although the form and fashion
Of what thou seemest, fades like sunset flame?
The uncreated Source of toil and passion,
Through everlasting change abides the same.

Yes, thou shalt die: but these almighty forces,
That meet to form thee, live for evermore:
They hold the suns in their eternal courses,
And shape the tiny sand-grains on the shore.

Be calmly glad, thine own true kindred seeing
In fire and storm, in flowers with dew impearled;
Rejoice in thine imperishable being,
One with the essence of the boundless world.

II.—THE CONFESSION.

OH, listen, for my soul can bear no more;
I crave not pardon; that I cannot win:
Yet hear me, Father, for I must outpour
My tale of deadly sin.

This night I passed through dim and loathsome lairs,
Where dwell foul wretches, that I feared to see:
Yet would to God my lot were such as theirs!
They have not sinned like me.

And then I saw that lovely girl who stood
Here, where I stand, some venial fault to show:
I was as fair, as innocently good,
One long, long year ago.

High thoughts were mine, and yearnings to endure
Some noble grief, and conquer heaven by pain:
Alas, I was a child; my prayers were pure,
Yet were they all in vain.

Love came and stirred my breast; nor fierce or vile,
But springing stainless, like some mountain stream;
And I was happy for a little while,
And lived as in a dream.

Thou art a priest, and dwellest far apart;
In vain I speak of joys thou hast not known:
Even to *him* I scarce could show my heart,
Although it was his own.

Nay, look not in my face! One night he came,
And I sprang forward, giddy with delight:
Father! His blood-stained hands! His eyes aflame!
His features deadly white!

Ah, wherefore ask me more? Some hated foe—
But 'tis a common tale—thou knowest all:
A word, a gesture; then a sudden blow;
And then—a dead man's fall.

Dumbly I heard, and could not weep or sigh;
Gone was all power of motion, e'en of breath;
But from my heart rose up one silent cry,
My first wild prayer for death.

"Farewell," he said, "farewell! Yet bury deep
My bloody secret, that it shall not rise;
Or it will track and slay me, though I sleep
Nameless, 'neath foreign skies."

Such boon he craved of me, his promised wife:
Earth's hope, heaven's joy, for him I lost the whole:
Some give but love, and some have given life,
But *I* gave up my soul.

"Embrace me not," I said. But ere he went
One long impassioned kiss he gave me yet:
Still, still we loved—oh, Father, I repent—
Would God I could forget!

Ah, not to fiery love would Christ deny
The gift of mercy that I cannot seek:
Father, a guiltless man was doomed to die,
And yet I did not speak.

Mine was the sin; for me it was he died,
Slain for the murder that my Love had wrought:
How blest was he, when Death's gate opened wide,
And heaven appeared unsought!

But I, who dared not seek the Virgin's shrine,
Whose very faith was madness and despair,
Lived lonely, exiled far from Love Divine,
From peace, from hope, from prayer.

None dreamt that I consumed with secret fire,
Nor knew the sin that withered up my youth:
I wasted with a passionate desire
Only to tell the truth.

But now they say that he I love is dead;
Calmly I listen; see, my cheeks are dry;
My heart is palsied, all my tears are shed;
And yet I would not die.

Let me do penances to save his soul,
And pray thy God to lay the guilt on me;
Strong is my spirit; I can bear the whole,
If that will set him free.

For could my expiating woe and shame
Raise him to Paradise, with Christ to dwell,
Then were there joy in purgatorial flame—
Nay, there were Heaven in Hell.

And then, perchance, when countless years are past,
Ages of torment in some fiery sea,
The grace of God may reach to me at last;
Yes, even unto me.

III.—FRIENDSHIP.

THE human soul that crieth at thy gates,
Of man or woman, alien or akin,
'Tis thine own Self that for admission waits—
Rise, let it in.

Bid not thy guest but sojourn and depart,
Keep him, if so it may be, till the end,
If thou have strength and purity of heart
To be his friend.

Not only, at bright morn, to wake his mind
With noble thoughts, and send him forth with song,
Nor only, when night falls, his wounds to bind;
But all day long

To help with love, with labour, and with lore,
To triumph when, by others' aid, he wins,
To carry all his sorrows, and yet more—
To bear his sins;

To keep a second conscience in thine own,
Which suffers wound on wound, yet strongly lives,
Which takes no bribe of tender look or tone,
And yet forgives.

But, should some mortal vileness blast with death
Thy love for comrade, leader, kinsman, wife—
Seek no elixir to restore false breath,
And loathsome life.

Thy love is slain—thou canst not make it whole
With all thy store of wine, and oil, and bread:
Some passions are but flesh—thine had a soul,
And that is dead.

IV.—NATURAL SELECTION.

I HAD found out a gift for my fair,
I had found where the cave men were laid:
Skulls, femur and pelvis were there,
And spears that of silex they made.

But he ne'er could be true, she averred,
Who would dig up an ancestor's grave—
And I loved her the more when I heard
Such foolish regard for the cave.

My shelves they are furnished with stones,
All sorted and labelled with care;
And a splendid collection of bones,
Each one of them ancient and rare;

One would think she might like to retire
To my study—she calls it a "hole"!
Not a fossil I heard her admire
But I begged it, or borrowed, or stole.

But there comes an idealess lad,
With a strut and a stare and a smirk;
And I watch, scientific, though sad,
The Law of Selection at work.

Of Science he had not a trace,
He seeks not the How and the Why,
But he sings with an amateur's grace,
And he dances much better than I.

And we know the more dandified males
By dance and by song win their wives—
'Tis a law that with *avis* prevails,
And ever in *Homo* survives.

Shall I rage as they whirl in the valse?
Shall I sneer as they carol and coo?
Ah no! for since Chloe is false
I'm certain that Darwin is true.

Edith (Nesbit) Bland.

1858.

Mrs. Bland, who is better known to the public under her maiden signature of E. Nesbit, was born in 1858. She began to write verses as early as 1870, when she had not yet completed her twelfth year. Her first published poems appeared in the *Sunday Magazine* and *Good Words.* She has published "Lays and Legends" (1886), and "Leaves of Life" (1888), besides some bright and successful children's books, essays, and stories, as well as poems, and has contributed largely to the *Argosy* and *Longman's Magazine.* In 1879 she married Mr. Bland, and has several children; and, as indicating her sympathies in certain directions, one of them is named Fabian, after the Fabian Society.

Mrs. Bland has a sweet lyrical note, and a keen sense of the pain and sorrow involved in the modern strain and stress of improvement, so-called progress, and enlightenment. The mechanical tendency of the time, which to such a degree represses free and happy expression of individuality, and the wrongs that flow from a constitution of society which so separates the various classes that they are without a common interest, or fail to recognise its existence, have deeply impressed her, and the sense of this colours much of her more serious verse. In one

or two of her poems there is a note of protest against certain forms of social inequality which is almost socialistic. If this were more obtaining, it might operate disadvantageously. But she seldom fails to communicate some fresh touch, or to find some new image which elevates and imparts relief. And she delights to escape often into a freer sphere, and is then very apt at giving voice to many of the indefinite yearnings of womanhood towards higher ideals, a fuller development, a wider sphere. She has, too, a touch of humour, and a liking for dramatic mediums, and can occasionally condescend to something approaching to the vivacity of society verse.

Her "Baby" poems are very sweet, and her treatment of the subject of love, true, sincere and strong. Much of her best work is in her longer poems, which space forbids us to quote; but the few short poems which we are able to give will doubtless excite a desire on the part of readers unfamiliar with her work to make a larger acquaintance with it.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

Mrs. Bland's later publications are too numerous to name in detail; they include "Poet's Whispers" (1895); "A Pomander in Verse" (1895); "Songs of Love and Empire" (1898); "Little Rhymes" (1898); "Rainbow and the Rose" (1905).

1886.

EDITH (NESBIT) BLAND.

I.—SONG.

(From "The Moat-House.")

OH, baby, baby, baby dear,
We lie alone together here;
The snowy gown and cap and sheet
With lavender are fresh and sweet;
Through half-closed blinds the roses peer
To see and love you, baby dear.

We are so tired, we like to lie
Just doing nothing, you and I,
Within the darkened quiet room.
The sun sends dusk rays through the gloom,
Which is no gloom since you are here,
My little life, my baby dear.

Soft sleepy mouth so vaguely pressed
Against your new-made mother's breast,
Soft little hands in mine I fold,
Soft little feet I kiss and hold,
Round soft smooth head and tiny ear,
All mine, my own, my baby dear.

And he we love is far away!
But he will come some happy day.
You need but me, and I can rest
At peace with you beside me pressed.
There are no questions, longings vain,
No murmuring, nor doubt, nor pain,
Only content and we are here,
My baby dear.

II.—THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA.

(FOR A PICTURE BY E. BURNE JONES.

I.

Habes tota quod mente petisti
Infelix.

IN deep vague spaces of the lonely sea
She deemed her soulless life was almost fair,
Yet ever dreamed that in the upper air
Lay happiness—supreme in mystery;
Then saw him—out of reach as you I see—
Worshipped his strength, the brown breast broad and bare,
The arms that bent the oar, and grew aware
Of what life means, and why it is good to be;
And yearned for him with all her body sweet,
Her lithe cold arms, and chill wet bosom's beat,
Vowed him her beauty's unillumined shrine:
So I—seeing you above me—turn and tire,
Sick with an empty ache of long desire
To drag you down, to hold you, make you mine!

II.

Attained at last—the lifelong longing's prize!
Raped from the world of air where warm loves glow
She bears him through her water-world below;
Yet in those strange, glad, fair, mysterious eyes
The shadow of the after-sorrow lies,
And of the coming hour, when she shall know
What she has lost in having gained him so,
And whether death life's longing satisfies.
She shall find out the meaning of despair,
And know the anguish of a granted prayer,
And how, all ended, all is yet undone.
So I—I long for what, far off, you shine,
Not what you must be ere you could be mine,
That which would crown despair if it were won.

LEAVES OF LIFE.

1888.

EDITH (NESBIT) BLAND.

I.—WINTER VIOLETS.

To M. O.

DEATH-WHITE azaleas watched beside my bed,
And tried to tell me tales of Southern lands;
But they in hothouse air were born and bred,
And they were gathered by a stranger's hands:
They were not sweet, they never had been free,
And all their pallid beauty had no voice for me.

And all I longed for was one common flower
Fed by soft mists and rainy English air,
A flower that knew the woods, the leafless bower,
The wet, green moss, the hedges sharp and bare—
A flower that spoke my language, and could tell
Of all the woods and ways my heart remembers well.

Then came your violets—and at once I heard
The sparrows chatter on the dripping eaves,
The full stream's babbling inarticulate word,
The plash of rain on big wet ivy-leaves;
I saw the woods where thick the dead leaves lie,
And smelt the fresh earth's scent—the scent of memory.

The unleafed trees—the lichens green and gray,
The wide sad-coloured meadows, and the brown
Fields that sleep now, and dream of harvest day,
Hiding their seeds like hopes in hearts pent down—
A thousand dreams, a thousand memories
Your violets' voices breathed in unheard melodies—

Unheard by all but me. I heard, I blessed
The little English, English-speaking things
For their sweet selves that laid my wish to rest,
For their sweet help that lent my dreaming wings;
And, most of all, for all the thoughts of you
Which make them smell more sweet than other violets do.

II.—AMONG HIS BOOKS.

A SILENT room—gray with a dusty blight
Of loneliness;
A room with not enough of life or light
Its form to dress.

Books enough though! The groaning sofa bears
A goodly store—
Books on the window-seat, and on the chairs,
And on the floor.

Books of all sorts of soul, all sorts of age,
All sorts of face—
Black-letter, vellum, and the flimsy page
Of commonplace.

All bindings, from the cloth whose hue distracts
One's weary nerves,
To yellow parchment, binding rare old tracts
It serves—deserves.

Books on the shelves, and in the cupboard books,
Worthless and rare—
Books on the mantelpiece—where'er one looks
Books everywhere!

Books! books! the only things in life I find
Not wholly vain.
Books in my hands—books in my heart enshrined—
Books in my brain.

My friends are they: for children and for wife
They serve me too;
For these alone, of all dear things in life,
Have I found true.

They do not flatter, change, deny, deceive—
Ah no—not they!
The same editions which one night you leave
You find next day.

You don't find railway novels where you left
Your Elzevirs!
Your Aldines don't betray you—leave bereft
Your lonely years!
And yet this common book of Common Prayer
My heart prefers,
Because the names upon the fly-leaf there
Are mine and hers.
It's a dead flower that makes it open so—
Forget-me-not—
The Marriage Service . . . well, my dear, you know
Who first forgot.

Those were the days when in the choir we two
Sat—used to sing—
When I believed in God, in love, in you—
In everything.

Through quiet lanes to church we used to come,
Happy and good,
Clasp hands through sermon, and go slowly home
Down through the wood.

Kisses? A certain yellow rose no doubt
That porch still shows,
Whenever I hear kisses talked about
I smell that rose!

No—I don't blame you—since you only proved
My choice unwise,
And taught me books should trusted be and loved,
Not lips and eyes!

And so I keep your book—your flower—to show
How much I care
For the dear memory of what, you know,
You never were.

III.—MORNING SONG.

BABY darling, wake and see,
Morning's here, my little rose;
Open eyes and smile at me
Ere I clasp and kiss you close.
Baby darling, smile! for then
Mother sees the sun again.

Baby darling, sleep no more!
All the other flowers have done
With their sleeping—you, my flower,
Are the only sleepy one;
All the pink-frilled daisies shout:
"Bring our little sister out!"

Baby darling, in the sun
Birds are singing, sweet and shrill;
And my bird's the only one
That is nestled softly still.
Baby—if you only knew,
All the birds are calling you!

Baby darling, all is bright,
God has brought the sunshine here;
And the sleepy silent night
Comes back soon enough, my dear!
Wake, my darling, night is done
Sunbeams call my little one!

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

EDITH (NESBIT) BLAND.

I.—BALLAD OF A BRIDAL.

"OH, fill me flagons full and fair,
Of red wine and of white,
And, maidens mine, my bower prepare,
It is my wedding night!

"Braid up my hair with gem and flower,
And make me fair and fine,
The day has dawned that brings the hour
When my desire is mine!"

They decked her bower with roses blown.
With rushes strewed the floor,
And sewed more jewels on her gown
Than ever she wore before.

She wore two roses in her face,
Two jewels in her e'en,
Her hair was crowned with sunset rays
Her brows shone white between.

"Tapers at the bed's foot," she saith,
"Two tapers at the head!"
(It seemed more like the bed of death
Than like a bridal bed.)

He came. He took her hands in his:
He kissed her on the face:
"There is more heaven in thy kiss
Than in Our Lady's grace!"

He kissed her once, he kissed her twice
He kissed her three times o'er,
He kissed her brow, he kissed her eyes
He kissed her mouth's red flower.

"Oh, love! What is it ails thy knight?
I sicken and I pine—
Is it the red wine or the white,
Or that sweet kiss of thine?"

"No kiss, no wine or white or red
Can make such sickness be:—
Lie down and die on thy bride-bed,
For I have poisoned thee!

"And though the curse of saints and men
Be for the deed on me,
I would it were to do again,
Since thou wert false to me!

"Thou shouldst have loved or one or none,
Nor *she* nor I loved twain;
But we are twain thou hast undone,
And therefore art thou slain.

"And when before my God I stand,
With no base flesh between,
I shall hold up my guilty hand,
And He shall judge it clean!"

He fell across the bridal bed,
Between the tapers pale.
"I, first, shall see our God"—he said,
"And *I* will tell thy tale;

"And, if God judge thee as I do
Then art thou justified:
I loved thee, and I was not true,
And that was why I died.

"If I might judge thee—thou shouldst be
First of the saints on high,
But, ah, I fear God loveth thee
Not half so dear as I!"

II.—A TRAGEDY.

I.

AMONG his books he sits all day
To think and read and write;
He does not smell the new-mown hay
The roses red and white.

I walk among them all alone,
His silly stupid wife;
The world seems tasteless, dead and done—
An empty thing is life.

At night his window casts a square
Of light upon the lawn;
I sometimes walk and watch it there
Until the chill of dawn.

I have no brain to understand
The books he loves to read;
I only have a heart and hand
He does not seem to need.

He calls me "Child"—lays on my hair
Thin fingers, cold and mild;
Oh! God of Love, who answers prayer,
I wish I were a child!

And no one sees and no one knows
(He least would know or see)
That ere love gathers next year's rose
Death will have gathered me;

And on my grave will bindweed pink
And round-faced daisies grow;
He still will read and write and think,
And never, never know!

III.—A TRAGEDY.

II.

IT S lonely in my study here alone
Now you are gone;
I loved to see your white gown mid the flowers,
While, hours on hours,
I studied—toiled to weave a crown of fame
About your name.

I liked to hear your sweet, low laughter ring;
To hear you sing
About the house while I sat reading here,
My child, my dear;
To know you glad with all the life-joys fair
I dared not share.

I thought there would be time enough to show
My love, you know,
When I could lay with laurels at your feet
Love's roses sweet;
I thought I could taste love when fame was won—
Now both are done!

Thank God, your child-heart knew not how to miss
The passionate kiss,
Which I dared never give, lest love should rise
Mighty, unwise,
And bind me, with my life-work incomplete,
Beside your feet.

You never knew, you lived and were content;
My one chance went;
You died, my little one, and are at rest—
And I, unblest,
Look at these broken fragments of my life,
My child, my wife.

IV.—THE GHOST.

THE year fades, as the west wind sighs,
And droops in many-coloured ways,
But your soft presence never dies
From out the pathway of my days.

The spring is where you are; but still
You, far away, to me can bring
Sweet flowers and dreams enough to fill
A thousand empty worlds with spring.

I walk the wet and leafless woods,
Your spirit ever floats before,
And lights its russet solitudes
With blossoms summer never wore.

I sit beside my lonely fire,
The shadows almost bring your face,
And light with memory and desire
My desolated dwelling-place.

Among my books I feel your hand
That turns the page just past my sight;
Sometimes behind my chair you stand
And read the foolish rhymes I write.

The old piano's keys I press
In random chords—until I hear
Your voice, your rustling silken dress,
And smell the roses that you wear.

I do not weep now any more,
I think I hardly even sigh,
I would not let you think I bore
The kind of wound of which men die.

Believe that smooth content has grown
Over the ghastly grave of pain;
Content! Oh lips that were my own
That I shall never kiss again!

SONNETS.

EDITH (NESBIT) BLAND.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

I. NIGHT.

WHILE yet the woods were hardly more than brown,
Filled with the stillness of the dying day
The folds and farms and faint green pastures lay,
And bells chimed softly from the gray-walled town.
The dark fields with the corn and poppies sown,
The dark delicious dreamy forest way,
The hope of April for the soul of May—
On all of these night's wide soft wings swept down.
One yellow star pierced through the clear, pure sky,
And showed above the network of the wood,
The silence of whose crowded solitude
Was broken but by little woodland things
Rustling dead leaves with restless feet and wings
And by a kiss that ended in a sigh.

II. MORNING.

The wind of morn awoke before the line
Of dawn's pearl haze made pale the eastern sky,
And woke the birds and woodland creatures shy,
And sighed night's dirge through tremulous boughs of pine
The north and south sky flushed, and the divine
Rose-radiance touched the moorland lone and high,
While still the wood was dusk, where, by and by
Splendid and strong the risen sun should shine.

It shone—on two that through the woodland came
With eyes averted and cold hands that clung,
And weary lips that knew forbidden things,
And hearts made sick with vain imaginings—
And over all the wood its glory flung,
The wood—that never more could be the same.

Mrs. Ernest Radford.

1858.

Mrs. Ernest Radford—*née* Dollie Maitland—was born December 3rd, 1858. She published her first book under the prettily and whimsically modest title, "A Light Load" (1891). A tiny, fragile load it is indeed, but not less exquisite than it is unsubstantial. It is a book of songs, and the songs are full of instinctive music, which soars naturally. They have the choice, unsought felicity of a nature essentially lyrical. Always finished in style, with the distinction which can never be acquired, they have almost an air of impromptu, and one might imagine the writer to be little conscious of the process by which they have come to be so finished. With certain delicate, remote echoes of the poets who have written the most haunting lyrics—of Heine, of Tennyson—they have the originality of a single temperament, of which one feels they are the direct outcome, the spontaneous, sincere expression. And this temperament, emotional as it is, has attained to see life steadily, to accept the hours of joy and of sadness without extravagant outcry. There is a restraint, a sense of measure, in the expression of varying moods, which gives a singular charm to these really passionate and deeply-felt lyrics. In the lines placed by way of dedication at the beginning—lines which any poet might be proud to have written—there is

a thrill of profound emotion which comes with all the stronger effect on account of the strenuous quietness with which it is expressed :—

"The love within my heart for thee
Before the world was had its birth,
It is the part God gives to me
Of the great wisdom of the earth."

These four lines seem to have something final about them—seem to say concerning the supreme devotion, the sacrament and worship of love, all that needs to be said. Something of the same fineness of appropriate expression occurs again and again, in something the same inevitable way, in many parts of the book. Here are some lines which have not a little of Wordsworth's "natural magic" of feeling and style —the perfect communion with Nature bringing with it the perfect expression :—

"When you are lonely, full of care,
Or sad with some new sorrow,
And when your tired fancy hides
The brightness of the morrow,
Ah, turn your footsteps to the woods
And meadows, where the rills
Are quietly flowing, when the moon
And stars shine on the hills.

"Upon your brow the great wise trees
Will breathe, and something sweet
Will reach you from the fragrant grass
You press beneath your feet;
And some fair spirit of the fields,
Peaceful and happy-eyed,
Will find a way into your heart,
I think, and there abide."

And in the lovely little lyric beginning "Amid a crown of radiant hills" (p.413) there is the same rare

quality, the same sympathetic delicacy of touch. Again, in another order of emotion, take the last stanza of the "Spring Song" (p.413); and yet again, the last stanza of "Evening," the following poem which has something curiously rare and intimate, so subtle a simplicity, and, in the last line, a touch of inexpressible magic:—

"Listen and we shall hear the voice
Of Evening, her name she told
When we stayed our boat by the shore to know
What wee flower shone 'neath the willow so,
And her hair was radiant gold.

"Now veiled in grey with silent step,
She walks where shades are deep,
And the great trees hear, and the blossoms know,
The song she sings, and her music low
Is charming them to sleep.

"My unseen brother and sister,
Who dwell 'neath the roofs we pass,
Are you sad and weary with toil and care?
My rest is full, I have rest to spare,
I whisper it through your grass."

This "Light Load," this book of songs and snatches so musical, so finished, so tenderly sincere, so full of contentment in love, of delight in the flowers and birds of spring, has the charm of a gracious unity—the unity, as I have said, of a special temperament. This augurs well for the future of a very genuine poet, whose first book is already so full of exquisite accomplishment. What Mrs. Radford will do it is impossible to foretell, but the hitherto unpublished poem, "Ah, bring it not," which belongs to a later date than most of the contents of the volume, seems to me to point towards work still more intimately

personal, still more strenuously simple and expressive, than even the simplest and most expressive of the poems previously published :—

SONG.

"Ah, bring it not so grudgingly,
The gift thou bringest me;
Thy kind hands shining from afar
Let me in welcome see,
And know the treasure that they hold
For purest gold.

"And, with glad feet that linger not,
Come through the summer land,
Through the sweet fragrance of the flowers,
Swiftly to where I stand,
And in the sunlight let me wear
Thy token rare.

"Fairer for me will be the day,
Fair all the days will be,
And thy rich gift upon my breast
Will make me fair to see,
And beautiful, through all the years,
In joys and tears.

"Ah come, and coming do not ask
The answering gift of mine,
Thou hast the pride of offering,
Taste now the joy divine,
And come, content to pass to-day
Empty away."

ARTHUR SYMONS.

Mrs. Radford has since published "One Way of Love" (1898); "Sea Thrift" (1904); and "Young Gardener's Kalendar" (1904).

A LIGHT LOAD.

1891.

DOLLIE RADFORD.

I.—SPRING SONG.

AH love, the sweet spring blossoms cling
To many a broken wind-tossed bough,
And young birds among branches sing
That mutely hung till now.

The little new-born things which lie
In dewy meadows, sleep and dream
Beside the brook that twinkles by
To some great lonely stream.

And children, now the day is told,
From many a warm and cosy nest,
Look up to see the young moon hold
The old moon to her breast.

Dear love, my pulses throb and start
To-night with longings sweet and new,
And young hopes beat within a heart
Grown old in loving you.

II.—SONG.

AMID a crown of radiant hills,
A little wood with blossoms rare
Breathes sweetly, while the young lark trills
His new learnt melody and fills
The fragrant air.

Among its boughs the fresh winds play,
And, where the spreading branches part,
The sunlight drops from spray to spray,
And seeks the ferny streams which stray
Within its heart.

And there the wild bee fills his cells,
And murmurs through the golden hours,
And charmèd fancies and sweet spells,
Are woven in the tall blue-bells
And cuckoo-flowers.

There many a mossy bank entwined
With shining leaves awaits our choice,
Come swiftly love, my soul unbind
With thy dear looks, that it may find
Its prisoned voice.

III.—"NIGHT."

AND art thou come again, oh Night;
I know thee by thy starry crown,
And by the mists of violet light
Which gather where thy robes fall down.
I know thee by the purple clouds
Thy strong wings spread around the moon,
And by the stillness which enshrouds
Thy presence, thou art come too soon.
Too soon, for lo thy fair love Sleep
Turns not her sweet face to the skies,
She lingers where the shadows creep,
And stays to kiss our children's eyes.

But when her gentle hands have blest
Our homesteads, she will come to thee,
And through the holy hours of rest
Thine arms will hold her safe, and she
Will hear the promises again
Thou bringest from the distant spheres,
And learn the reason of our pain,
And meaning of our bitter tears.

Thine eyes are steadfast and I dare
Their mighty mystery to read,
But mine are dimmed by thought and care
And fail me in my greatest need.

I watch for thee, wilt thou not bring
One message to my fainting heart?
Through summer-time and snow and spring
I watch for thee. Must thou depart
Thus silently—when will it come,
That perfect day which we await?
For us thy lips are ever dumb,
And voiceless is thy calm estate,
Ah! tell thy fair love Sleep that she
May touch me when she passes by,
And whisper what she hears from thee
In some sweet lullaby.

IV.—ORPHEUS.

WE wandered in that shadow-land,
My fair love, you and I,
Through all its strangeness hand in hand
We journeyed silently.

My lyre is hanging cold and dumb,
Mute with our triumph song,
I have no voice now you are come,
Whom I have sought so long.

But I will bring you in Love's land,
Into Love's highest place,
And crown you there, and understand
The wonder of your face.

And then my joyous song shall rise
To sun and moon and star;
And all the worlds beyond the skies
Shall tell how fair you are.

V.—BY THE SEA.

THE clouds have gathered soon to-night,
They hang above the quiet sea,
And through the air a muffled sound
Is borne to me

From that dim island where the souls
Of all the Ages lie at rest;
It beats upon my throbbing brain
And troubled breast.

If thou wert standing on the shore
Beside me now, and held my hand,
I think that I should hear it plain
And understand

For there is one note in it all,
Which loud and clear has come to me,
And I have caught it in my heart
To tell to thee.

"Eyes steadfast from the watch of worlds,
Hearts big with secrets of the spheres,
We have no power to move you now
With hopes or fears."

"No power," thy soul has filled my soul,
Thy life has rounded all of mine,
Thy love has girt me with a strength
Which is divine.

And when that sound perchance one day
Comes to us with a mighty roll,
We two shall stand unmoved, and hear
And learn the whole.

A BALLAD OF VICTORY.

(THE YELLOW BOOK, VOL. IX.)

WITH quiet step and gentle face,
With tattered cloak, and empty hands,
She came into the market place,
A traveller from many lands.

And by the costly merchandise,
Where people thronged in eager quest,
She paused awhile, with patient eyes,
And begged a little space for rest.

And where the fairest blossoms lay,
And where the rarest fruits were sent
From earth's abundant store that day,
She turned and smiled in her content.

And where the meagre stall was bare,
Where no exultant voice was heard,
Beside the barren basket, there
She stayed to say her sweetest word.

Around her all the people came,
Drawn by the magic of her speech,
To learn the music of her name,
And whose the country she would reach.

She looked upon them, as she stood,
Until her eyes were full of tears,
She said, "My way is fair and good,
And good my service to the years."

When, for her beauty, men besought
To ease the sadness at her heart
She murmured, " You can give me nought
But space to rest, ere I depart."

When for her tender healing ways,
The women begged her love again,
She answered, "In these bounteous days
I may not let my love remain."

And when the children touched her hair,
And put their hands about her face,
She sighed, "There is so much to share,
I well might bide a little space."

But ere the shadows longer grew,
Or up the sky the evening stole,
She took the lonely way she knew,
And journeyed onward to her goal.

She turned away with steadfast air,
From all their choice of fair and sweet.
And as she turned they saw how bare
And bruisèd were her pilgrim feet.

Through many a rent and tattered fold,
As she went forward on her quest,
They saw the big wounds, deep and old,
The cruel scars upon her breast.

They called to her to wait, to learn
How they would cure her pain, to dwell
With them awhile; she did but turn
And wave her smiling last farewell.

And in their midst a woman rose,
And said, "I do not know her name,
Nor whose the land to which she goes,
But well the roads by which she came.

"Among the lonely hills they lie,
Beyond the town's protecting wall,
Where travellers may faint and die,
And no one hearken to their call.

"Far up the barren heights they go,
Worn ever deeper night and day,
By toiling feet, and tears that flow
For some sweet flower to mark the way.

"And down the stony slopes they lead,
Through many a deep and dark ravine
Where long ago it was decreed
Nor sun nor moonlight should be seen.

"Across the waste where no help is,
And through the winds and blinding showers,
Among the mist-bound silences
And through the cold despairing hours.

"Among the lonely, lonely hills,
Ah me, I do not know her name,
Nor whose the bidding she fulfils,
But well the roads by which she came."

Then spoke a youth, who long, apart,
Had watched the people come and go,
With clearer eyes and wiser heart,
And cried, "Her face and name I know.

"And well the passage of her flight,
The starless plains she must ascend,
And well the darkness of the night,
In which her pilgrimage shall end.

"But stronger than the years that roll,
Than travail past or yet to be,
She presses to her hidden goal,
A crownless, unknown Victory."

Graham R. Tomson.

1860.

PERHAPS one could hardly find a volume so typical of what cultured folk were caring for in 1889 (had been caring for for say the preceding ten years) than "The Bird-Bride, a volume of Ballads and Sonnets, by Graham R. Tomson" (Longmans). Weird Scots ballads after the manner just then revived by Mr. Swinburne, imitations of the Greek anthology, poems on pictures, bookish poems, *vers de société* in Mr. Dobson's metres, reminiscences of Herrick, ballades, rondeaus and villanelles, folk-songs, "marches," translations from Provençal poets; all these common interests Mrs. Tomson managed to vivify with a touch of her own individuality.

Her title poem, dealing with a charming story of frequent occurrence, in various forms, in folk-lore, showed considerable skill and some imaginative power in the treatment of such themes. "Deid Folks' Ferry" is also among the best of those ballads in which people say "brither" for brother, and "blaw" for blow. All the poems in the volume showed rare sensitiveness to dainty and distinguished influences, and there was not a page in it without some charm of cadence or delicately-chosen word. Perhaps it was by her sonnets (as being less open to the influences of fashion) that Mrs. Tomson was most safely to be judged a poet. In these Mrs.

Tomson speaks with an accent of sincerity which all her enthusiasm for cats and first editions is unable to inspire.

Her best verses have true passion and tenderness, as well as æsthetic (sensitiveness) and artistic finish. She sometimes strikes a deep note of reflection as in "The Smile of All-Wisdom," and especially in such a poem as the less sensational "Two Songs," in which she so suggestively contrasts the cadence of the song of a bird and the piping of a shepherd lad.

In her second volume, "A Summer Night and Other Poems" (Methuen), Mrs. Tomson forsakes her *bric-à-brac* and her French forms, and deals with themes of broader, commoner appeal. We feel she is singing more intimately, giving us more of what we fondly call the "real self." Her themes are divided between her London garden,—the cloistral seclusion of which seems deepened by the sound of wayfaring feet ever going by its walls—and the downs of the south coast. She gives us charming pictures of each, but especially charming are her London impressions; for Mrs. Tomson participates in that feeling for the poetry of towns of which we have seen a recent revival:—

> "Never for us those dreams aforetime shown
> Of white-winged angels on a shiny stair,
> Or seas of sapphire round a jasper throne:
> Give us the spangled dusk, the turbid street;
> The dun, dim pavement trod by myriad feet,
> Stained with the yellow lamplight here and there;
> The chill blue skies beyond the spires of stone."

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

Graham Tomson has since published "Vespertilia, and Other Verses" (1895); "An Island Rose" (1900); and "After Sunset" (1904).

THE BIRD-BRIDE.

A Volume of Ballads and Sonnets.

1889.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.

I.—BALLAD OF THE BIRD-BRIDE.

(Eskimo.)

THEY never come back, though I loved them well;
I watch the South in vain;
The snow-bound skies are blear and grey,
Waste and wide is the wild gull's way,
And she comes never again.

Years agone, on the flat white strand,
I won my sweet sea-girl:
Wrapped in my coat of the snow-white fur,
I watched the wild birds settle and stir,
The grey gulls gather and whirl.

One, the greatest of all the flock,
Perched on an ice-floe bare,
Called and cried as her heart were broke,
And straight they were changed, that fleet bird-folk,
To women young and fair.

Swift I sprang from my hiding-place
And held the fairest fast;
I held her fast, the sweet, strange thing:
Her comrades skirled, but they all took wing,
And smote me as they passed.

I bore her safe to my warm snow house;
Full sweetly there she smiled;
And yet, whenever the shrill winds blew,
She would beat her long white arms anew,
And her eyes glanced quick and wild.

But I took her to wife, and clothed her warm
With skins of the gleaming seal;
Her wandering glances sank to rest
When she held a babe to her fair, warm breast,
And she loved me dear and leal.

Together we tracked the fox and the seal,
And at her behest I swore
That bird and beast my bow might slay
For meat and for raiment, day by day,
But never a grey gull more.

A weariful watch I keep for aye
'Mid the snow and the changeless frost:
Woe is me for my broken word!
Woe, woe's me for my bonny bird,
My bird and the love-time lost!

Have ye forgotten the old keen life?
The hut with the skin-strewn floor?
O winged white wife, and children three,
Is there no room left in your hearts for me,
Or our home on the low sea-shore?

Once the quarry was scarce and shy,
Sharp hunger gnawed us sore,
My spoken oath was clean forgot,
My bow twanged thrice with a swift, straight shot,
And slew me sea-gulls four.

The sun hung red on the sky's dull breast,
The snow was wet and red;
Her voice shrilled out in a woful cry,
She beat her long white arms on high
'The hour is here,' she said.

She beat her arms, and she cried full fain
As she swayed and wavered there.
'Fetch me the feathers, my children three,
Feathers and plumes for you and me,
Bonny grey wings to wear!'

They ran to her side, our children three,
With the plumage black and grey;
Then she bent her down and drew them near,
She laid the plumes on our children dear,
'Mid the snow and the salt sea-spray.

'Babes of mine, of the wild wind's kin,
Feather ye quick, nor stay.
Oh, oho! but the wild winds blow!
Babes of mine, it is time to go:
Up, dear hearts, and away!'

And lo! the grey plumes covered them all,
Shoulder and breast and brow.
I felt the wind of their whirling flight:
Was it sea or sky? was it day or night?
It is always night-time now.

Dear, will you never relent, come back?
I loved you long and true.
O winged white wife, and our children three,
Of the wild wind's kin though ye surely be,
Are ye not of my kin too?

Ay, ye once were mine, and, till I forget,
Ye are mine forever and aye,
Mine, wherever your wild wings go,
While shrill winds whistle across the snow
And the skies are blear and grey.

II.—THE SMILE OF ALL-WISDOM.

SEEKING the Smile of All-Wisdom one wandered afar
(He that first fashioned the Sphinx, in the dust of the past):
Looked on the faces of sages, of heroes of war;
Looked on the lips of the lords of the uttermost star,
Magi, and kings of the earth—nor had found it at last,

Save for the word of a slave, hoary-headed and weak,
Trembling, that clung to the hem of his garment, and said,
'Master, the least of your servants has found what you seek:
(Pardon, O Master, if all without wisdom I speak!)
Sculpture the smile of your Sphinx from the lips of the Dead!'

Rising, he followed the slave to a hovel anear;
Lifted the mat from the doorway and looked on the bed.
Nay, thou hast spoken aright, thou hast nothing to fear:
That which I sought thou hast found, Friend; for, lo, it is here!—
Surely the Smile of the Sphinx is the Smile of the Dead!'

Aye, on the stone lips of old, on the clay of to-day,
Tranquil, inscrutable, sweet with a quiet disdain,
Lingers the Smile of All-Wisdom, still seeming to say,
'Fret not, O Friend, at the turmoil—it passeth away;
Waste not the Now in the search of a Then that is vain:

'Hushed in the infinite dusk at the end shall ye be,
Feverish, questioning spirits that travail and yearn,
Quenched in the fulness of knowledge and peaceful as we:
Lo, we have lifted the veil—there was nothing to see!
Lo, we have looked on the scroll—there was nothing to learn!'

SONNETS.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.

I.—AN INTERLUDE.

SIGHING she spoke, and leaning clasped her knees;—
'Well hast thou sung of living men and dead,
Of fair deeds done, and far lands visited.
Sing now of things more marvellous than these!
Of fruits ungathered on unplanted trees,
Of songs unsung, of gracious words unsaid,
Of that dim shore where no man's foot may tread
Of strangest skies, and unbeholden seas!

'Full many a golden web our longings spin,
And days are fair, and sleep is over-sweet;
But passing sweet those moments rare and fleet,
When red spring sunlight, tremulous and thin,
Makes quick the pulses with tumultuous beat
For meadows never won, or wandered in.'

II.—OMAR KHAYYÁM.

To A. L.

SAYER of sooth, and Searcher of dim skies!
Lover of Song, and Sun, and Summertide,
For whom so many roses bloomed and died;
Tender Interpreter, most sadly wise,
Of earth's dumb, inarticulated cries!
Time's self cannot estrange us, nor divide;
Thy hand still beckons from the garden-side,
Through green vine-garlands, when the Winter dies.

Thy calm lips smile on us, thine eyes are wet;
The nightingale's full song sobs all through thine,
And thine in hers,—part human, part divine!
Among the deathless gods thy place is set,
All-wise, but drowsy with Life's mingled Wine,
Laughter and Learning, Passion and Regret.

III.—BLIND MAN'S HOLIDAY.

WHEN vanished is the gold and violet,
And all the pearl and opal turned to grey,
We call the drowsy children from their play.
'Come, bonny birds, to roost; the sun has set!'
And still they cry, 'We are not sleepy yet;
Only a little longer may we stay—
Only a little while?' half-sighing say;
'We were so still, we hoped you might forget.'

We, too, delay, with childish stratagem,
The while we break our playthings one by one,
Sobbing our foolish hearts out over them;
Till comes the wise nurse Death, at set of sun,
When, wearied out and piteous, we run
Weeping to her and clasp her garments' hem.

IV.—HEREAFTER.

SHALL we not weary in the windless days
Hereafter, for the murmur of the sea,
The cool salt air across some grassy lea?
Shall we not go bewildered through a maze
Of stately streets with glittering gems ablaze,
Forlorn amid the pearl and ivory,
Straining our eyes beyond the bourne to see
Phantoms from out Life's dear, forsaken ways?

Give us again the crazy clay-built nest,
Summer, and soft unseasonable spring,
Our flowers to pluck, our broken songs to sing,
Our fairy gold of evening in the West;
Still to the land we love our longings cling,
The sweet, vain world of turmoil and unrest.

A SUMMER NIGHT AND OTHER POEMS.

1891.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.

I.—A SUMMER NIGHT.

'Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou.'

THE linden leaves are wet,
The gas-lights flare—
Deep yellow jewels set
In dusky air,
In dim air subtly sweet
With vanished rain.

Hush!—from the distant street
Again—again—
Life's music swells and falls,
Despairing—light—
Beyond my garden walls
This summer night.

Where do you call me, where?
O voice that cries!
O murky evening air,
What Paradise,
Unsought, unfound, unknown
Inviteth me,
With faint night-odours blown?
With murmurous plea?

Future art thou, or Past?
Hope, or Regret?
My heart throbs thick and fast,
Mine eyes are wet,
For well and well I know
Thou hast no share,
Nor hence, nor long ago,
Nor anywhere.

II.—TWO SONGS.

THE sun is gone from the valleys,
The air breathes fresh and chill;
On the barn-roof yellow with lichen
A robin is singing shrill.

Like a tawny leaf is his bosom,
Like a dead leaf is his wing;
He is glad of the coming winter
As the thrush is glad of the spring.

The sound of a shepherd's piping
Comes down from a distant fold,
Like the ripple of running water,
As tuneless, and sweet, and cold.

The two songs mingle together;
Like and unlike are they,
For one sounds tired and plaintive,
And one rings proud and gay.

They take no thought of their music,
The bird and the shepherd lad;
But the bird-voice thrills with rapture,
And the human note is sad.

III.—IN THE RAIN.

RAIN in the glimmering street—
Murmurous, rhythmical beat;
Shadows that flicker and fly;
Blue of wet road, of wet sky,
(Grey in the depths and the heights);
Orange of numberless lights,
Shapes fleeting on, going by.

Figures, fantastical, grim—
Figures, prosaical, tame,
Each with chameleon-stain,
Dun in the crepuscle dim,
Red in the nimbus of flame—
Glance through the veil of the rain.
Rain in the measureless street—
Vistas of orange and blue;
Music of echoing feet,
Pausing, and pacing anew.

Rain, and the clamour of wheels,
Splendour, and shadow, and sound;
Coloured confusion that reels
Lost in the twilight around.

* * * * *

When I lie hid from the light,
Stark, with the turf overhead,
Still, on a rainy Spring night,
I shall come back from the dead.

Turn then and look for me here
Stealing the shadows along;
Look for me—I shall be near,
Deep in the heart of the throng:
Here, where the current runs rife,
Careless, and doleful, and gay,

Moving, and motley, and strong,
Good in its sport, in its strife.

* * * * *

Ah, might I be—might I stay—
Only for ever and aye,
Living and looking on life!

IV.—CHIMÆRA.

THE yellow light of an opal
On the white-walled houses dies
The roadway beyond my garden
It glimmers with golden eyes.

Alone in the faint spring twilight,
The crepuscle vague and blue,
Every beat of my pulses
Is quickened by dreams of you.

You whom I know and know not
You come as you came before
Here, in the misty quiet,
I greet you again once more.

Welcome, O best belovèd—
Life of my life—for lo!
All that I ask you promise,
All that I seek you know.

The dim grass stirs with your footstep,
The blue dusk throbs with your smile·
I and the world of glory
Are one for a little while.

* * * *

The spring sun shows me your shadow,
The spring wind bears me your breath,
You are mine for a passing moment,
But I am yours to the death.

Jane Barlow.

JANE BARLOW is the elder daughter of the Rev. J. W. Barlow, Vice-Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. She was born at Clontarf in the early sixties. Her home for a long time has been The Cottage, Raheny, not far from her birth-place, looking to the sea and Howth, with the Dublin mountains behind them. The Cottage is partly thatched and is surrounded by green lawns and old gardens, with the fields beyond. It is out of hearing of Dublin, but there is a noisy village not far from its gates, and now and again a train-whistle sounds to remind one that this is not the remote region known among Miss Barlow's country-people as "The back of God-speed."

At The Cottage at Raheny Miss Barlow has led a singularly retired and gentle life, wrapped about with home affections and very far from the world. The love of country things, of birds and animals and flowers, are part of her life: but seeing that she is shyer of the world than any hermit of the desert, shy even of the friendly village folk, it is nothing less than marvellous that she should have written those intimate and sympathetic sketches of Irish life in prose and poetry which have followed each other at intervals since "Bogland Studies" was published in 1892. A couple of visits to Connemara and the South, an occasional flying visit to relatives in England, constitute pretty well all her travels; and never did a traveller's thoughts

turn so fondly and lovingly to home. Up to the time of her publishing "Bogland Studies" her social *entourage*, apart from her own family, was such as might have surrounded Jane Austen. Sweet old ladies of an unquestioning conservatism in all things chiefly inhabit those white-walled, old-fashioned villas about Raheny. They little knew what a gentle rebel was in their midst. All the time those studies of Irish life, as delicate and observant as humorous and wise, in their own way, as Jane Austen's, were forming in the quiet girl's mind. She has found her own way to a broad and enlightened patriotism; if indeed that great civic virtue was not fostered in a home in which grew all the virtues.

Miss Barlow was very shy of publishing. Her early work appeared in Reviews signed by a pseudonym. It was always poetry in those days. After "Bogland Studies" she wrote for Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, "Irish Idylls" (1892), which have been followed by "Kerrigan's Quality" (1893), "The End of Elfintown" (1894), "The Battle of the Frogs and Mice" (1894), "Nansen's Fairing" (1895), "Strangers at Lisconnel" (1895), "Mrs. Martin's Company" (1896), "A Creel of Irish Stories" (1897), "From the East unto the West" (1898), "From the Land of the Shamrock" (1900), "Ghost-Bereft" (1901), "The Founding of Fortunes" 1902), "By Beach and Bogland" (1905).

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON.

GHOST-BEREFT.

1901.

JANE BARLOW.

I.—A MISUNDERSTANDING.

(CONNEMARA. SPRING, 1898.)

"'TIS my bitter grief," she said.
(The western light ebbed, streaming back
Across the ocean-strand that laid
Its frost of foam and rust of wrack
To rim her doorway square and black.
Beyond the sill a brooding shade,
Unruffled by the sunset's wraith
Where from the hearth it glimmered red,
Thronged all her little house with night.
One day that brought her cureless scathe
Had sorrow touched her comely head
With sudden snow there set in sight,
The seamew's wing and merle's wing mixt
Above kind eyes, and sad and bright,
With folded crease of care betwixt.)
"'Tis my grief: too young and old
Were they all to understand,
When the hunger came and cold;
Though I told them, oft I told,
How the blight was on the land,
And the people's crops around
Lay black-rotted in the ground,
And the good turf gone to loss
In the summer's teeming rain.
But my talk was all in vain.
God forgive me, I'd be cross,
For the children had me vexed,

When it's asking me they'd keep
From one morning to the next:
Would I give them ne'er a bit?
Troth and would I. Deep and steep
I'd have climbed, dear hearts, for it,
Or gone barefoot ten score mile.
But I'd naught, mavrone, I'd naught.
And belike the creatures thought
I had plenty all the while.

"So I'd bid them go to sleep,
Or I'd bid them run and play,
But, poor souls, the live-long day
They'd do nothing else than sit
Crouching close about the fire
I was pestered keeping lit
With the driftwood off the shore:
For thin branches, light and small,
Are the best I can drag higher
Through this shingle to the door,
Now I've no one any more
To be lending me a hand.

"But the trouble of my trouble,
Whatsoever may befall,
Day and night I ne'er forget,
Was my mother there, bent double
Till she looked no size at all
In her little old grey shawl,
With her heart, well knew I, set
On her evening cup of tea;
'Deed those times she missed it sore,
When I'd ne'er a grain to wet,
Though a word she wouldn't say.

"So, when sunsetting was past,
She'd come creeping o'er the floor,

And reach down her cup and plate
Dinny brought her from Belfast—
They be shining yonder yet—
And she'd leave them standing ready.
For a sign to show 'twas late.
Then she'd sit again and wait,
Like a lad whose net is cast,
With the little trick she'd planned;
Ah, she'd watch me long and steady.
And I'd dread to stir or speak,
But I'd see her how, at last,
Very sorrowful she'd take
And fetch back the empty cup,
Making shift to hang it up
With her old hand all ashake;
Maybe thinking in her mind
I'd turned thankless and unkind—
Sure my heart came nigh to break.
"Many a time I wished to God
Not so much that He'd contrive
For the creatures' bit and sup,
Since the blight's upon the land,
Scarce a spud left, scarce a sod,
Till the folks can hardly live,
And I wouldn't ask Him aught
That He mightn't have to give—
But I wished they would be let
Have the sense to understand,
So that less they'd grieve and fret,
And be sure I grudged them naught.
'Tis my bitter grief," she said.
(The listening neighbour duly sought
To speak some witless, kindly word,
That wooeth hope, when hope lies dead.

Perhaps she heeded not nor heard,
So far she looked across the strand
And past the lone fields of the sea,
Where light down fading paths was fled.)
"'Tis my heart's long grief," said she,
"For they ne'er could understand."

II.—THE TURN OF THE ROAD.

Deceptaque non capiatur.

WHERE this narrow lane slips by,
All the land's breadth, over-glowed
Under amplest arching sky,
Seems a secret meet to keep
For these hedged banks close and high,
Till the turn of the road.
Then a curve of sudden sweep—
Lone and green the country side,
Like a cloak, with scarce a fold,
And the white track's dwindling thread,
Lies in basking beams dispread:
You may look out far and wide
From the turn of the road.

There's a gleam of rusted gold,
And a blink of eave-stained wall,
Up the lane a rood or so,
Where a thatched roof huddles low;
And a day will seldom fall
But its mistress, bent and old,
Rime-frost hair and little red shawl,
Through her black-gapped doorway fares,
Very frail and meagre and small,
And the years' unlifted load

With a faltering foot she bears
'Twixt the tall banks to and fro;
But her steps will ever stay
Ere the turn of the road—
Never reach it; you might guess
That they halt for feebleness,
Till you hear her story told.
For she says: "The children all
Are a weary while away.
Years long since I watched them go—
'Twas when dawn came glimmering cold—
Round the turn of the road.
And I'm lonesome left behind;
Yet time passes, fast or slow,
And they're coming home some day;
They'll come back to me, they said:
Just this morn that's overhead
It might chance, for aught I know.
"And that's always in my mind,
For I dream it in my sleep,
And I think it when I wake,
And when out of doors I creep
Towards the turn of the road,
Then a step I hardly make
But I'm saying all the while,
Ere another minute's gone
I may see them there, all three,
Coming home, poor lads, to me,
Round the turn of the road.
"But a stone's throw further on,
If I'd creep to where it showed
Like a riband stretched a mile,
And the longest look I'd take
Saw naught stirring on its white,

Sure my heart were fit to break.
"So or ever I come in sight,
Home I set my face again,
Lest I'd lose the thought that's light
Through the darksome day. And then
If I find the house so still
That my heart begins to ache,
And a hundred harms forebode,
Ere my foot is o'er the sill,
I can think I needn't fret,
If they're maybe near me yet
At the turn of the road."

III.—A LONG DAY.

(A Villanelle.)

I'M thinking all this day she may be dead,
(The holly-laden child that slum-ward hies),
Because I took away her bit of bread.
She'd hid it in the wall beside her head,
That she might reach it easily where she lies:
I'm thinking all this day she may be dead
For want of it. 'Twas but a little shred,
But, ah, she's weak, and if she starves and dies
Because I took away her bit of bread,
I'll wish I'd choked. For since good-bye we said,
And then the cold was dark, before sunrise,
I'm thinking all this day she may be dead.
But here's a penny at last, and now instead
I'll bring the very biggest roll it buys,
Because I took away her bit of bread,
Straight home to her, that's waiting safe in bed,
No fear. Yet till I've seen her with my eyes,
I'm thinking all this day she may be dead,
Because I took away her bit of bread.

IV.—OUTSIDE THE TOY SHOP.

BESIDE the door they stand, anear the pane
Tricked with toy-wares. It is a dapple-grey
In smooth round wafers dight, and lifts alway
One prancing foot from grass-green board upta'en.
An urchin he, oft met down alley and lane,
Half lost in his wide old rags; agrin to-day,
Because he still with fearful joy dares lay
A stroking finger on that furry mane.

He tastes his perilous pleasure like a bird
Of quick small feet and wary eye, that comes
To peck strewn fragments, flown at breath scarce heard.
You smile among the hedgerows. In the slums
You think: When flits this child-glee lightly stirred,
Shall manhood's craving miss even these poor crumbs?

V.—EXPECTATION.

FLEET wheels had whirled for us, deep hedgerows threading,
Till where, down labyrinthine lanes enfolden,
The grey, green-mantled church stood, half withholden
From passing eyes by elms full-fledged for shedding
Midsummer shade, noon-shrunken, softly spreading
O'er swarded path a dappled pavement, golden
And beryl-flecked, to a door, whose dusk-arch olden
Let glimpse in hesitant gleams, the sill's gloom dreading.
A knot of children, snowy-bibbed, blue-skirted,
Hung round the gate, from devious ways diverted;
Shawled crone's slow halt and girl's light foot one goal
Had found thereby. *Grand weather for whose wedding?*
Methought: and straight a daw from ivied steading
Swooped startled, as a bell began to—toll.

VI.—IN SANCTUARY.

ACROSS the lone floor of the rayless night
One came to a door that was barred on light,
A glimmer agleam through beckoning chink,
As with lamp's still beam, as with taper's blink.
And sore she sued their shrine to win,
From mirk and moan of the wild shut in,
And fled the fear its menace bore
With shrouding of shadow evermore.

So out of the dark, as it breathed its dread,
Shrill crying, she knocked with a hope ill-sped,
For grim and stark that portal wide
At her hand's touch mocked, and her prayer denied.
Then sick at heart, that found not grace,
She turned her again the night to face,
As terror turns on swift-foot foes—
And lo! the clear east all climbing rose.

Katharine Tynan

(Mrs. H. A. Hinkson).

1861.

Katharine Tynan was born in Dublin in the early sixties. Her home from early youth was a delightful one, a low thatched farmhouse under the Dublin mountains, with wide lonely fields about it, and so completely cut off from city life. The farmhouse was a delightful place, irregular, wandering, with a tangled orchard at the back, a garden with a sun-dial, a summer-house, a labyrinth of little flower-beds with box borders, a privet hedge, and a great walnut tree, which came down in the big wind of February, 1903.

She was a child slow to learn at school, but engrossed in learning after her own fashion. A few years at the Dominican Convent of St. Catharine of Sienna at Drogheda brought her little fruits of solid learning, although some fruits of the imagination. In fact, she would learn her own way or not at all.

Her own way was to gather honey from the most unlikely sources. She confesses to wayward childishness and admits that she could have been no more than eight years old when she carried her forbidden reading—very light literature of the penny paper order—to a safe place, stuffed up under the bodice of her small frock, till she went stiffly as in a corselet. Her place of refuge was in a loft over a stable, the criss-cross window of which looked into a sycamore tree. There doubtless she carried "Aurora Floyd," of which her pious mother bereft her one day of Lent when she may have seen seven years.

She read, among other things, "The Mysteries of Paris," by Eugene Sue, some lurid romances of G. W. Reynolds, a set of Maria Edgeworth, "The Poets of the Nation"—a queerly assorted lot indeed! Her father let her read everything, from "The Wide Wide World" to "Tristram Shandy," from Faber's "Tales of the Angels" to "The Near and the Heavenly Horizons" of Madame de Gasparin. She had Longfellow, a Burns of the most complete and unexpurgated, a Milton, a Moore, of course, and the first two volumes of the *Cornhill*, where she revelled in Owen Meredith, and "The Great God Pan" of Mrs. Browning.

However nothing pointed to a literary career for her, till one day of her seventeenth year, feeling herself slighted, she constructed some verses, and got them printed in a Dublin paper. Very soon afterwards she got a sonnet into the *Spectator*. *The Graphic* published several of her little poems and paid her half-a-guinea for them. The first half-guinea cheque her father wished to have framed; but she cashed it and bought stuff for a frock, and very shoddy stuff it was, she says, as may well be believed. She was almost twenty before she made any literary friends. The first was Father Russell of *The Irish Monthly*, the brother of him who was afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen, Lord Chief Justice of England. Through him she made various literary friendships and acquaintanceships. Lady Russell's sister, Miss Rosa Mulholland, now Lady Gilbert, was the object of her young girl's worship. In 1884 she went to London for the first time, and made an abiding friendship when she met Mrs. Meynell. The following year Wilfred Meynell arranged for her the publication of her first volume of poems, "Louise de la Vallière" (1885). The book brought her new friends: William Rossetti,

Christina Rossetti, Cardinal Newman, and Cardinal Manning; "Shamrock" (1887), followed. Coming back to Ireland, she found herself welcomed into a little literary circle, of which W. B. Yeats, "A. E." Russell, and Douglas Hyde were members. They met at the houses of Dr. Sigerson, John and Ellen O'Leary (the old Fenian chief and his sister), and Johnson of Ballykilbeg. In 1889 she was in London with the Meynells. Chief among her events then she remembers that historic evening at Lord Russell's house in Harley Street, when Gladstone, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Parnell were met together—the rehabilitation of Mr. Parnell, after the suicide of Pigott, a rehabilitation accepted with a certain scornful tolerance. She could tell how Mr. Gladstone buried himself in a corner with an elderly lady, an old crony of his, and Lord Randolph disappeared early, and Mr. Parnell turned from the adulation of the crowd to flash pleased surprise at sight of one young Irishwoman who worshipped him and always will. That summer, too, she visited Mr. Wilfred and Lady Anne Blunt at Crabbet Park. About that time she had begun to write prose for the *Speaker* and for the *Scots* and *National Observer*. Henley's praise gave her great pleasure. He gave her "The Song of the Sword, "Katharine Tynan, *Sorori in Arte*," and others of his books down to "Hawthorn and Lavender." Her next friend was Jane Barlow, a friendship that survives. In 1892 she married happily. In 1894 her first volume was published by Messrs. Lawrence & Bullen. She has to her credit now more than a score of novels, seven books of verse, besides short stories, a volume of biography, and a good deal of editing. She edited the four volume "Cabinet of Irish Literature," a new

edition of which she prepared for Blackie's, of Glasgow. She has been a reviewer, and has contributed to many magazines.

Mrs. Hinkson's later volumes of verse are well represented in the following pages. It is verse of the natural and spontaneous order characteristic of the Irish muse. In reviewing "A Cluster of Nuts," a writer in the *Athenæum* wrote: "Mrs. Hinkson is a lyric poet, and her prose, like her verse, is near to the heart of nature, sweet with the smell of fresh grass and flowering thorn, and warm with a tender sympathy that embraces all things that live and die; but that goes out more fully to trees and fields and summer skies than to men and women." This was doubtless true at the time, and as far as it went, but Mrs. Hinkson has written much since then; her human relationships have increased, and no one can read her child poetry without feeling that her human sympathy is keen, tender, warm, and constant. Many mother-hearts will find expression in "The Meeting," "The Mother," and "The Desire." Devotional feeling makes much of her verse religious in the best sense, and spirituality of thought often imparts the lustre which transfigures.

ALFRED H. MILES.

BALLADS AND LYRICS.

1892.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

I.—THE CHILDREN OF LIR.

"And their stepmother, being jealous of their father's great love for them, cast upon the king's children, by sorcery, the shape of swans, and bade them go roaming, even until Patrick's mass-bell should sound in Erin—but no farther in time than that did her power extend."—*The Fate of the Children of Lir.*

OUT upon the sand-dunes thrive the coarse long grasses,
Herons standing knee-deep in the brackish pool,
Overhead the sunset fire and flame amasses,
And the moon to eastward rises pale and cool:
Rose and green around her, silver-gray and pearly,
Chequered with the black rooks flying home to bed;
For, to wake at daybreak, birds must couch them early,
And the day's a long one since the dawn was red.

On the chilly lakelet, in that pleasant gloaming,
See the sad swans sailing: they shall have no rest:
Never a voice to greet them save the bittern's booming
Where the ghostly sallows sway against the West.
"Sister," saith the gray swan, "Sister, I am weary,"
Turning to the white swan wet, despairing eyes;
"O," she saith, "my young one." "O," she saith,
"my dearie,"
Casts her wings about him with a storm of cries.

Woe for Lir's sweet children whom their vile step-
mother
Glamoured with her witch-spells for a thousand
years;
Died their father raving—on his throne another—
Blind before the end came from the burning tears.
Long the swans have wandered over lake and river.
Gone is all the glory of the race of Lir;
Gone and long forgotten like a dream of fever:
But the swans remember the sweet days that were.

Hugh, the black and white swan with the beauteous
feathers,
Fiachra, the black swan with the emerald breast,
Conn, the youngest, dearest, sheltered in all weathers,
Him his snow-white sister loves the tenderest.
These her mother gave her as she lay a-dying;
To her faithful keeping; faithful hath she been,
With her wings spread o'er them when the tempest's
crying,
And her songs so hopeful when the sky's serene.

Other swans have nests made 'mid the reeds and
rushes,
Lined with downy feathers, where the cygnets
sleep,
Dreaming, if a bird dreams, till the daylight blushes,
Then they sail out swiftly on the current deep.
With the proud swan-father, tall, and strong, and
stately,
And the mild swan-mother, grave with household
cares,
All well-born and comely, all rejoicing greatly:
Full of honest pleasure is a life like theirs.

But alas! for my swans, with the human nature,
Sick with human longings, starved for human ties,
With their hearts all human cramped in a bird's stature,
And the human weeping in the bird's soft eyes.
Never shall my swans build nests in some green river,
Never fly to Southward in the autumn gray,
Rear no tender children, love no mates for ever,
Robbed alike of bird's joys and of man's are they.

Babbles Conn the youngest, "Sister, I remember
At my father's palace how I went in silk,
Ate the juicy deer-flesh roasted from the ember,
Drank from golden goblets my child's draught of milk.
Once I rode a-hunting, laughed to see the hurly,
Shouted at the ball-play, on the lake did row;
You had for your beauty gauds that shone so rarely:"
"Peace!" saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago!"

"Sister," saith Fiachra, "well do I remember
How the flaming torches lit the banquet-hall,
And the fire leapt skyward in the mid-December,
And among the rushes slept our staghounds tall.
By our father's right hand you sat, shyly gazing,
Smiling half and sighing, with your eyes aglow,
As the bards sang loudly all your beauty praising."
"Peace!" saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago!"

"Sister," then saith Hugh, "most do I remember
One I called my brother, one, earth's goodliest man,
Strong as forest oaks are where the wild vines clamber,
First at feast or hunting, in the battle's van.
Angus, you were handsome, wise and true and tender,
Loved by every comrade, feared by every foe:
Low, low lies your beauty, all forgot your splendour:"
"Peace!" saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago!"

Dews are in the clear air, and the roselight paling,
Over sands and sedges shines the evening star,
And the moon's disc lonely high in heaven is sailing,
Silvered all the spear-heads of the rushes are,—
Housèd warm are all things as the night grows colder,
Water-fowl and sky-fowl dreamless in the nest;
But the swans go drifting, drooping wing and shoulder,
Cleaving the still water where the fishes rest.

II.—SHEEP AND LAMBS.

ALL in the April evening,
April airs were abroad;
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road;
All in the April evening,
I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary, and crying
With a weak, human cry.
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet;
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

But for the Lamb of God,
Up on the hill-top green,
Only a Cross of shame
Two stark crosses between.

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad;
I saw the sheep with their lambs
And thought on the Lamb of God.

CUCKOO SONGS.

1894.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

I.—GOD'S BIRD.

NAY, not Thine eagle, Lord;
No golden eagle I,
That creep half-fainting on the sward
And have not wings to fly.

Nor yet Thy swallow dear,
That, faring home to Thee,
Looks on the storm and hath no fear
And broods above the sea.

Nor yet Thy tender dove,
Meek as Thyself, Thou Lamb!
I would I were the dove, Thy love,
And not the thing I am!

But take me in Thy hand
To be Thy sparrow, then;
Were two sparrows in Holy Land,
One farthing bought the twain.

Make me Thy sparrow, then,
That trembles in Thy hold;
And who shall pluck me out again
And cast me in the cold?

But if I fall at last,
A thing of little price,
If Thou one thought on me hast cast,
Lo, then my paradise

II.—LAMENT.

YOU were like a light
In your place;
Fires of love burned bright
In your face,
Full of grace.
You were like a light in your place.

Like a light put out,
You are flown;
Night is dark about,
Ullagone!
Cold as stone.
Like a light put out you are flown.

A LOVER'S BREAST-KNOT.

1896.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

I.—LOVE'S TROUBLE.

FOR you I fear the stabbing rain,
The wounding wind;
O wandering love, return again,
Turn, and be kind!
The distant thunder in the hills
I fear for you;
I fear the lightning's spear that kills,
Wavering, blue.

For you the noonday sun I dread,
O noonday sun,
Rest quietly on his dear head,
My dearest one!
For you all evil beasts I fear,
All foul affrights,
With winged shadows that creep anear
In lonely nights.

Dear angels, guard him where he goes,
In day and dark!
Lest nigh his path, in lily and rose,
The serpent lurk.
O, sleepless eyes of blessed ones,
Watch o'er my love;
And wings that shame th' eternal suns
Winnow above!

II.—LOVE COMFORTLESS.

THE child is in the night and rain
On whom no tenderest wind might blow,
And out alone in a hurricane.
Ah, no,
The child is safe in Paradise!

The snow is on his gentle head,
His little feet are in the snow,
O, very cold is his small bed!
Ah, no,
Lift up your heart, lift up your eyes!

Over the fields and out of sight,
Beside the lonely river's flow,
Lieth the child this bitter night.
Ah, no,
The child sleeps under Mary's eyes!

What wandering lamb cries sore distressed.
Whilst I with fire and comfort go?
O, let me warm him in my breast!
Ah, no,
'Tis warm in God's lit nurseries!

POEMS.

1901.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

I.—THE TREE-LOVER.

SWEET is the sweet May weather,
Trees go airy and bright;
Winged with the gold-green feather,
Veiled in the deep-sea light.

Clad in the emerald silk,
All a-flutter, a-glitter;
Blossoms white as the milk,
Never were roses sweeter.

Leafy shadows, all dancing,
Lovely in shine and shower,
Ever twinkling and glancing,
Birds have built them a bower.

Lord of the leaf and tree,
When 'tis time for my going,
Leafing time let it be,
Neither snowing nor blowing!

After that journey taken
Let me open my eyes
To woods by a May-wind shaken,
Full of the birds' replies!

Paradise woods in Spring,
Scarcely than Earth's were sweeter,
Every leaf's on the wing,
All a-flutter, a-glitter.

Paradise woods in commotion,
Tossed in a heavenly May;
After the bitter ocean,
Dear and homelike were they.

Lord of the world to be,
Build me no jasper palace,
But the young leaf on the tree,
And the young bloom on the trellis!

II.—TALISMAN.

ALL heaven in my arm.
The child for a charm
'Gainst fear and 'gainst sorrow.
To-day and to-morrow
The child for a charm
Betwixt me and harm.

O mouth, full of kisses!
Small body of blisses!
Your hand on my neck
And your cheek to my cheek.
What shall hurt me or harm
With all Heaven in my arm?

III.—MATERNITY.

HER body, sweet to be his food,
Yields him his precious milk and good.
No body of death but life, see then
The sacred body of Motherhood!

Her heart, by one sweet guest renewed,
Hath room for all earth's hapless brood.
Yea, wounds for all earth's hurt children,
The broken heart of Motherhood!

INNOCENCIES.

1905.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

I.—THE DEAD CHILD.

THE little son was dead
Ere he was born, alas!
Never upon his hapless head
The saving water was.

In Crios-na-Lanna drear
They laid the precious clay
That will not rise in any year
Nor on the Judgment Day.

As she went to and fro,
Her tears fell down like rain
For the small son she might not know,
Whom she had borne in pain.

As she went out about,
Her tears they burned like fire
For the small wandering soul cast out
That was our Lord's desire.

As she went to the well
Past Crios-na-Lanna dark,
She heard the sheep and the sheep-bell
And many a happy lark.

O'er churchyard grave and moss
The sheep cropped, well content;
The little grave without a cross
Cried to her as she went.

She never raised her eyes,
But drew the water clear.
Is that a new-born babe that cries,
Or straying lambkin near?

O is it lamb or child
That leaves the churchyard sod?
A little lamb all undefiled
And like the Lamb of God.

That seeks its mother mild
With tender soft alarms,
O is it lamb or is it child
That bleats within her arms?

O is it child or lamb
That pushes at her breast?
A lamb that sought its straying dam
And has come home to rest.

On Crios-na-Lanna's rock
The sheep browse safe from harms.
One little lamb has left the flock
And leaped into her arms.

By Crios-na-Lanna lone
At morning-tide and even,
The hungry heart has found its own
The mother is in heaven.

II.—THE MEETING.

AS I went up and he came down, my little six-year boy,
Upon the stairs we met and kissed, I and my tender Joy.
Oh! fond and true, as lovers do, we kissed and clasped and parted;
And I went up and he went down, refreshed and happy-hearted.

What need was there for any words, his face against my face?
And in the silence heart to heart spoke for a little space
Of tender things and thoughts on wings, and secrets none discovers;
And I went up and he went down, a pair of happy lovers.

His clinging arms about my neck, what need was there for words?
Oh, little heart that beat so fast like any fluttering bird's!
"I love," his silence said; "I love," my silence answered duly;
And I went up and he went down comforted wonderfully.

III.—THE MOTHER.

GREAT passions I awake that must
Bow any woman to the dust
With fear lest she should fail to rise
As high as those enamoured eyes.

Now for these flying days and sweet
I sit in Beauty's Mercy-Seat.
My smiles, my favours I award,
Since I am beautiful, adored.

They praise my cheeks, my lips, my eyes,
With Love's most exquisite flatteries,
Covet my hands that they may kiss
And to their ardent bosoms press.

My foot upon the nursery stair
Makes them a music rich and rare;
My skirt that rustles as I come
For very rapture strikes them dumb.

What jealousies of word and glance!
The light of my poor countenance
Lights up their world that else were drear.
"But you are lovely, mother dear!"

I go not to my grave but I
Know Beauty's full supremacy:
Like Cleopatra's self, I prove
The very heights and depths of Love.

So to be loved, so to be wooed,
Oh, more than mortal woman should!
What if she fail or fall behind!
Lord, make me worthy, keep them blind!

IV.—THE DESIRE.

GIVE me no mansions ivory white,
Nor palaces of pearl and gold;
Give me a child for all delight
Just four years old.

Give me no wings of rosy shine,
Nor snowy raiment, fold on fold,
Give me a little boy all mine
Just four years old.

Give me no gold and starry crown,
Nor harps, nor palm-branches unrolled,
Give me a nestling head of brown
Just four years old.

Give me a cheek that's like the peach,
Two arms to clasp me from the cold,
And all my heaven's within my reach
Just four years old.

Dear God, You give me from Your skies
A little Paradise to hold,
As Mary once her Paradise,
Just four years old.

V.—TO THE MOTHER.

I HEARD them talking and praising the gray French country,
Dotted with red roofs high and steep,
With just one gray stone church-tower keeping sentry
Over the quiet dead asleep.
Gray skies and grayer dunes, as gray as duty,
Gray sands where gray gulls flew.
And I said in my passionate heart, they know not beauty,
Beloved, who know not you.

I heard them praise the gold of the stormy sunset,
And the pale moon's path on the sea;
I thought of your clouds with their wild magnificent onset,
Your eagles screaming free.
I thought of your mild kind mountains, angel-bosomed,
Quiet in dusk and dew.
What flower of beauty that ever in Paradise blossomed,
Love, was denied to you?

I thought of the pale green dawns, and gold day's closes.
Dear, I shall not forget
Nights when your skies were full of the flying roses,
Millions and millions yet.
All your still lakes and your rivers broad and gracious,
Dear mountain glens I knew;
When the trump of judgment sounds and the world's in ashes,
I shall remember you.

Remember! foretaste of Heaven you are, O Mother!
By bog-lands brown and bare,
Where every little pool is the blue sky's brother,
Your wild larks spring in the air.
Land of my heart! smiling I heard their praises,
Smiling and sighing too.
I would give this gray French land for a handful of daisies
Plucked from the breast of you.

Cicely Fox Smith.

1882.

THE publication of four successive volumes of verse by a writer who has not attained to twenty-four years of age is surely phenomenal, and one naturally looks for signs of haste and immaturity in work produced so early and with so much rapidity. The work, however, if not perfect, will bear the scrutiny, and its examination only increases one's wonder at both the quantity and the quality of the output.

Cicely Fox Smith was born at Lymm, in Cheshire, in 1882, and was educated at home. Her father, who died in 1905, was a barrister on the Northern Circuit, an old Balliol man—a pupil of Jowett, and the Arnold prize-winner of his year; her mother, a clergyman's daughter. Her publications are "Songs of Greater Britain" (1899), "The Foremost Trail" (1900), "Men of Men" (1901), and "Wings of the Morning" (1904).

"Songs of Greater Britain" appeared at the outbreak of the South African War, and the time spirit is well represented in its pages. But nature is not forgotten amid the blaze and fury of strife; the poet has still time to listen to the skylark's song and note the falling of the autumn leaf. "The Foremost Trail" appeared in the following year, while the war was still raging far afield, and its echoes found rhythmic expression in its numbers. "Wings of the Morning" was issued in 1904, when peace was once more smiling on the country, and, though the patriotic note is not absent, sweeter notes prevail.

The selections given in the following pages fairly represent the several volumes, and show an advance from first to last from which something may be expected in future volumes. These will be awaited with interest, —hopeful interest not perhaps unattended by anxiety. The poet is so young, and the world is so jealous of its best, that both can afford to wait, if by waiting betterment can be achieved.

ALFRED H. MILES.

SONGS OF GREATER BRITAIN.

1899.

CICELY FOX SMITH.

I.—RED, WHITE AND BLUE.

SONS of the seagirt land,
Strong round the banner stand,
Steadfast and true!
Honour and loyalty
Ever our watchword be!
Flutter o'er land and sea
Red, white and blue!

Red for the life-blood shed,
When for their country bled
Brave men and true!
White for our stainless name,
Blue for our faith and fame,
Guarding from every shame
Red, white and blue!

Britons, while earth endure,
Keep we our 'scutcheon pure
Centuries through!
Long may Britannia's fame
Inviolate remain—
Ever without a stain
Red, white and blue!

II.—THE COLONISTS.

WE have heard a voice that calls us—
A voice that bids us go—
A voice that bids us waken
From the narrow world we know.
We go to do our duty,
Unfearing toil and pain,
For the flag, the flag of England,
The flag that rules the main!

There are fairer meads in England
Than these, so parched and sere;
The wild birds' song in England
Is sweeter far than here.
We may not dwell in England,
For we have work to do
For the land, the land of England,
The land we love so true!

Still, still the sons of England
Pursue the onward track,
Tho' men who look not forward
Strive hard to hold them back.
Still, still the word is "Onward!"
With hearts that fear not blame,
On the way, the way of Britons,
The way that leads to fame!

III.—THE SKYLARK.

WINGED seraph of the summer heaven,
Whose wondrous rapture, wild and long,
A hundred bards in vain have striven
To prison in a song!

How can they tell, with all their art,
What passions make thy glad throat swell
That, throbbing at thy fiery heart,
Thou feel'st but canst not tell?

How can we picture in our dreams
The joys that thro' thy pæan glow
That joy that soars so high it seems
About to break in woe?

Sing on, wild bird, thy wild glad song
That fills our eyes with sudden tears
While back upon the fancy throng
Memories of vanished years!

Sing on, sing on, for ever free!
We cannot know what thou dost sing
And better it should ever be
An undiscovered thing.

IV.—AUTUMN.

STERN Time hath banished with a frown
The summer, now grown wan and old;
In grief the woodlands lay adown
Their crowns of gold.

No more the copses echo round
With stockdove's moan and woodwren's lay;
To gladden distant shores with sound
They wing their way.

The wild winds shudder thro' the trees,
Where late the redstart's carol rang;
The torn nests wanton with the breeze
Where sweet birds sang.

The sere, sad leaves, their glory done,
Fall from the bough to meet the wave:
The stream they shadowed from the sun
Gives them a grave.

THE FOREMOST TRAIL.

1900.

CICELY FOX SMITH.

I.—THE FOREMOST TRAIL.

WE'VE drunk our fill of pleasure,
Of town-bred ease and mirth;
Our hearts are fain to wander
The utmost ends of earth.
The oft-sung songs ring hollow;
The well-known ways grow stale;
We're off to lead the vanguard,—
To tread the Foremost Trail!

It's oh to leave behind us
The Railhead of the Past,
To roam, where none have trodden,
Thro' hopeful lands and vast!
The fruitless feast is over;
The lamplight's glare grows pale;
And "Outward ho!" 's the watchword,—
To tread the Foremost Trail!

O some may drive to eastward,
Stem on into the day,
And some steer out to westward,
Where sunset skies grow grey.
It's "hey! the flowing furrow
And ho! the swelling sail!"
We're outward bound for action—
To tread the Foremost Trail!

II.—A WORSHIPPER.

AGAINST the oaken pew he leant,
A child of summers three or four,
And smiled to see each stained-glass saint
Cast by the sunlight on the floor.

He wondered why the folk should look
So sad and stern on either hand.
His thoughts were wandering from the book,
The prayers he could not understand.

Yet, when the organ's thunder filled
The dim-lit aisles in praise and prayer,
Sweetly his baby treble trilled
Happiest of all who worshipped there.

The sunshine made his heart rejoice;
And who shall chide him? Who declare
God did not hear the childish voice
That sang because His world was fair?

WINGS OF THE MORNING.

1904.

CICELY FOX SMITH.

I.—LONDON POOL.

LONDON Pool's in London town,
(Ay, boys! O boys!)
London Pool's in London town,
Where the great ships anchor down!
O to shake our canvas free,
Hear the cordage cheerily
Whistling to the open sea
Down from London Pool, O!

London Pool's a crowded place,
(Ay, boys! O boys!)
London Pool's a crowded place,
Crafts and crews of every race!
O to hear the clanking chain
Trail along the wharf again—
Hear the tautening ropes astrain
Down from London Pool, O!

London Pool's a gallant sight,
(Ay, boys! O boys!)
London Pool's a gallant sight,
Toil by day and glare by night!
O to shake our heels and go—
Feel the four free winds' ablow,
Hail the lights of long ago
Down from London Pool, O!

II.—AN ANGEL UNAWARES.

YE gave me of your broken meat
And of your lees o' wine,
That I should sit and sing for you
All at your banquet fine.

Ye gave me shelter from the storm
And straw to make my bed,
And let me sleep through the wild night
With cattle in the shed.

Ye know not from what lordly feast
Hither I come this night,
Nor to what lodging with the stars
From hence I take my flight.

But there's such wine that warms my blood
As yet you never knew,
So that I heed not wet nor cold,
Nor rags the winds blow through.

If I might sing the song I heard
Ere I came to your door,
Ye should set down the brimming cup
Nor heed the banquet more.

Ye may not hear the songs I hear,
Nor share that feast o' mine,
To whom ye gave your broken meat
And of your lees o' wine.

III.—AFTERGLOW.

WET, streaming sand, and the tide going down;
Boats on the beach, and the sails patched and brown,
And the hearth-smoke hanging blue up above the drowsy town.

Strong scent of weed blowing off the harbour-bar,
A liner's trail of smoke on the skyline faint and far,
And the bell-buoy clanging, and a lonely star.

Wet gleaming shore, and the sea-gull sweeping free,
A swinging lamp alight in the ropes by the quay,
And the wind singing low of a ship that waits for me.

IV.—A BIRD'S CALL.

OVER the upland fields, where free and strong
The fresh hill-breezes swept,
I heard a wild bird calling all day long,
Calling as if it wept.

And the wild voice brought back delights and tears
From time's forgotten hoard,
Cleaving the dead cold mist of bygone years
Like a two edgèd sword.

And speech forgotten sprang up word for word,
Unfolding like a scroll
At the wild mandate of a lonely bird
Calling like a lost soul.

O sad sweet cry beneath the skies of grey
O tale of perished years!
O everlasting hope for the new day,
The joy beyond the tears.

When we, who striving to the light must go,
Whom toils and trammels bind,
Somewhere the purport of our days shall know,
Somewhere at last shall find

God's treasure-house of lost loves found again,
Of torn hearts healed anew,
Sorrow grown joy, and pleasure after pain,
And all dear dreams come true.

V.—JOURNEY'S END.

WHEN the long day's tramp is over, when the journey's done,
I shall dip down from some hill-top at the going down o' the sun,
And turn in at the open door, and lay down staff and load,
And wash me clean of the heat o' day, and white dust o' the road.

There shall I hear the restless wind go wandering to and fro.
That sings the old wayfaring song—the tune that the stars know;
Soft shall I lie and well content, and I shall ask no more
Than just to drowse and watch the folk turn in at the open door.

To hail the folk I used to know, that trudged with me in the dust,
That warmed their hands at the same fire, and ate o' the same crust,
To know them safe from the cold wind and the drenching rain,
Turn a little, and wake a little, and so to sleep again.

AC ETIAM.

BESIDES the women poets represented in the foregoing pages there are several who may conveniently find here the only reference possible in this edition. These are Lady Charlotte Elliot, who published "Medusa, and Other Poems" in 1878. This volume contains verse of high quality in some variety. The poems "Medusa" and "The Son of Metaneira" show unmistakable power in the handling of classical themes and in the command of musical measures. Both poems evidence subtlety of imagination and elevation of feeling delicately expressed in sustained and resonant verse. "Rosebud and Ragweed," a pathetic story of child life, shows the poet's power of easy versification in a different form. "Darkness after Dawn," a London reverie, is an example in a different vein, and shows occasionally, like some others of the poet's verses, more vigour in thought than in expression. One is reminded in this connection of the lines in Lefroy's sonnet, "Art that Endures" (443, vol. vii. "Poets and Poetry, XIXth Century"):

> "Match well thy metres with a strong design.
> Let noble themes find nervous utterance. Flee
> The frail conceit, *the weak mellifluous line.*'

C. Amy Dawson, author of "Sappho," an epic of much poetical force and strength in blank verse, and "Idylls of Womanhood" (1892); a series of poems in various measures, treating of "A Woman's Ethics," "A Woman's Love," "Woman's Wit," "A Woman's Vengeance," "A Woman's Faith," and "A Woman's

Sin." Certainly a high performance. Besides these the late Amy Levy, author of "Xantippe, and Other Verses" (1881), "A Minor Poet, and Other Verses" (1884), "A London Plane-Tree, and Other Verses" (1889), and several works of fiction, of which "Reuben Sachs" (1888) is the most important; Miss Sarson C. J. Ingram, author of 'Selina's Story" (1875), and "Caedmon's Vision" (1882); Miss Elizabeth Rachel Chapman, author of "The New Purgatory, and Other Poems" (1887); Miss May Probyn, author of "Poems" (1881), "A Ballad of the Road, and Other Poems" (1883), "Once, Twice, Thrice, and Away," a novel (1878), and other works of fiction; Frances Wynne, author of "Whisper!" (poems) (1890); Alice Furlong, author of "Roses and Rue"; the anonymous author of "Songs of Lucilla"; Lady Margaret Sackville, author of "Hymn to Dionysus"; the authors of "Hand in Hand," verses by a mother and daughter (Mrs. Kipling and Mrs. Flemming); Lady Egerton, the author of "The Lady of the Scarlet Shoes," and Miss Elizabeth Gibson, are all worthy of more extended reference than can be given here.

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